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Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia

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Michael Friederich has completed a PhD on the life, work and establishment of the Tatar national poet, Gabdulla Tukay. A specialist in Turkic, Iranian and Islamic

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Notes on Transliteration and Place Names

For Uyghur language transliterations throughout this volume, we use the Romanization system adopted in Komatsu, H. et al. (eds.) *Chūo-Yurashia o shiru jiten* (An Encyclopaedia of Central Eurasia) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2005). We consider this to be the closest representation of the Uyghur phonetic system.[1] For Chinese language terms, we adopt the Chinese *pinyin* transliteration system. With regard to place names in Xinjiang, we have opted for the Uyghur language versions preferred by the long-term local inhabitants of the region (except for where we explicitly discuss contested local and Han Chinese representations of place, as in the Introduction). In doing so, we use the Romanization system noted above. As a result, the best-known oasis in the region is transliterated as 'Qäshqär', despite the fact that it has long been known in conventional English usage as 'Kashgar'. We hope in this way to break with tradition and move towards a linguistically more proximate rendering of the name. In making reference to the independent Central Asian states, however, we maintain existing conventions in the scholarship of Central Asia, thus Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizstan, and so on. Names of people and places in China proper are rendered using the Chinese *pinyin* transliteration system, providing simplified Chinese characters where these are necessitated by the discussion.

1 We extend our thanks to Jun Sugawara and Jim Millward for providing us with the source for this transliteration chart.

Series Editors' Preface

The Complex Pathways of History: Uyghurs and Formations of Identity

Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart[1]

This set of specialist studies on the Uyghur people carries implications and resonances that go far beyond the immediate geographical areas discussed in close detail by its various authors. The Uyghurs are known to the wider world largely in terms of their political problems as a marginal population incorporated within the Chinese state. These studies, however, convincingly show how complex the features of their own identity are, what rich cultural sources their searches for, and assertions of, identity draw upon, and how valuable in general a broad anthropological/ethnographic approach can be to understanding the complex contexts of their lives. There is perhaps scarcely a problem, issue, or substantive topic in the fields of scholarship on ethnicity, politics, hybridity, and minority and state relations, that is not at least touched on, and illuminated, in the chapters of this volume. Telling parallels and comparisons with other areas come to mind as one reads these ethnographic portraits. The overall effect is to see the Uyghurs' identity configurations in a holistic way that envelops and transcends the specifics of their current political situation. At the same time, these essays enable their readers to appreciate both the dilemmas and the opportunities for self-definition which Uyghur people experience.

These studies intertwine culture and politics, with varying emphases on one or the other of these aspects of life. What is most striking and welcome here, in comparison to purely political accounts of ethnogenesis, or purely cultural ones that ignore politics, is that chapters on music, poetry, life-cycle rituals, naming practices, shrine pilgrimages, and food are included, along with studies of resistance, Islamic reformism, and the political negotiation of ideas of the Uyghurs as a "nation". The discussions of politics include cultural issues, and the discussions on culture include political issues. As a result the reader gains a deeply layered, contextualized, and vivid perception of the "complex pathways of history" we have here referred to in our title for our Preface to this volume.

---

1 Prof. Andrew Strathern and Dr. Pamela J. Stewart are a husband and wife research team who have for many years conducted research work around the globe, including the Pacific, Asia, Europe, and Australia, and published their findings in scholarly books and articles (see www.pitt.edu/~strather/sandspublicat.htm). They have a broad range of interests within anthropology, cultural history, and ritual and religious studies. They also are the co-editors of the *Journal of Ritual Studies*.

While each chapter contributes decisively to this portrait of layered complexities of history and identity, the Introduction by Ildikó Bellér-Hann and her collaborators lays out many important themes. One of these is the need to move beyond a binary focus shaped by the contemporary sense of conflict between Uyghur and Han identities. The conflict certainly exists, and emerges into world news in reports of confrontations between the Chinese state and Uyghurs in Xinjiang Province which the Chinese state authorities frame as a part of a global conflict with "terror" (see Strathern and Stewart 2006a, for discussion of global contexts of "terror"). The studies in the present volume situate that conflict in the wider arena of relations between Central Asia and China, running over spans of time that long predate the political creation of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Uyghur identity – or identities in all their complexities -- are thus not seen as simply a response to the impositions of the PRC; and indeed "Uyghur identity" itself is not a monolithic or unitary formation, but carries many historical strands in it, composed by the interweaving of Central Asian (including Soviet-era Russian) and Han influences. This in-between character of the Uyghurs reveals comparabilities with other cases of identity formations around the world. The Ulster-Scots in Northern Ireland and in Counties of the Republic of Ireland belonging to the historical region of Ulster are an example (see Strathern and Stewart 2005a, 2006b).

Ulster-Scots people are the descendants of Lowland Scots people who came to the Ulster area as settlers in the early seventeenth century C.E., especially as a part of King James VI's "Plantation of Ireland" policy.[2] This was a policy of deliberate colonization designed to fill the Ulster area with populations that would be loyal to the Crown of England and Scotland, unified as one realm in 1603 (Strathern and Stewart 2001: 122). Many of the Scots came from the South-West of Scotland. They were followers of religious doctrines that led in the direction of Presbyterian modes of church governance and worship. Over the centuries since the Plantations they to some extent blended in with their Irish surroundings, to some extent retained their own traditions, and to a good extent suffered discrimination as Dissenters from the established Anglican Church until the Test Act established in 1703 was repealed in 1828 (Strathern and Stewart 2001: 166, 171). Their Scots-derived ways of speech were devalued also by comparison with standard English forms of expression. (The same happened in Scotland itself.) They became over time an enclaved minority within the British state, and also within the Republic of Ireland, following its emergence in the twentieth century. It is only very recently, as a result of the Good Friday peace accords of 1998 (Strathern and Stewart 2006b: 145), that they have been able to reassert aspects of their historical identity, including language, music, song, poetry, dance, and literary productions, that relate them to their Scots origins and distinguish them both from the English and from the Irish streams of tradition. The official emphasis on the imperative of recognizing different cultural traditions

2 For many years Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart have spent time living and working in Scotland and Ireland. They are Visiting Professor and Visiting Research Fellow, Department of Anthropology, Durham, England and Visiting Research Fellows in the Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies, University of Aberdeen, Scotland. Some of their publications from this work are listed here in the references list.

as a peaceful, rather than a violent, process has enabled this transformation to come about. The United Kingdom government has generally favored this process, partly by way of granting "parity of esteem" to minority groups and partly as a strategy to push forward the momentum of devolution within Northern Ireland as a way of dealing with long-standing and violent conflicts there. Ulster-Scots people on both sides of the border between the UK and the Republic find themselves in a rather ambivalent position. They can freely practice and assert their "culture", while at the same time they have to chart their own pathways of political affiliation, either to the British or to the Irish state. Their version of the Scots language also differs to some extent from its congeners in Scotland itself, so there is a sense of commonality mixed with a sense of difference between these Ulster-Scots and their "mainland" counterparts.

While the Ulster-Scots have been recently permitted to redevelop their culture and language as a part of the peace process and peaceful cross-border relations within Ulster, in the past their identity was submerged on both sides of the Border between the UK (Northern Ireland) and the Republic: in the Republic of Ireland their Presbyterian traditions ran counter to a predominant Catholic emphasis; and in Northern Ireland they were aggregated with the English-speaking Protestant populations. It is only in the context of recent political change that they have been able to recombine cultural elements that were previously stripped from them. Their case is paradigmatic of the situations of cross-border minority populations in many areas. They have also been caught, as so many people were, in the violent conflicts of the time of the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland, dating from the late 1960s (McKittrick and McVea 2000: 1); and may now stand to benefit from a return of the devolved government in Northern Ireland. Comparing and contrasting their situation with the Uyghurs, we see one broad similarity: as a minority belonging to both sides of a political divide, they have been, and are, greatly influenced by the political winds of the day. There is also a major difference: the Uyghurs today have to struggle to assert their identities in a state context that accepts the idea of "ethnic minorities" but is hostile to any idea of political separatism. This context, of course, is what has led some scholars to argue that Uyghur identities are forged largely in opposition to Han Chinese state power. Counterbalancing this is the more complex picture painted by contributors to the present book, showing that Uyghur identities are long established and partake of historical influences from both Central Asia and China.

The concept of historically layered identities, which we have advanced here, applies well to another context where we have carried out fieldwork among the indigenous Austronesian language speaking peoples of Taiwan (see Stewart and Strathern 2007; Strathern and Stewart 2005b, 2007a, 2007b, n.d.)[3] These peoples, heirs to a heritage of Austronesian culture and language that links them to the Pacific Islands and to South-East Asia, are recognized to have been in Taiwan for some

3 Strathern and Stewart have also worked in Taiwan since 2000. They have been Visiting Research Fellows at the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan during stays in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Some of their publications from this work are listed here in the references list. See also P.J. Stewart and A. Strathern (eds) n.d., *Religious and Ritual Change: Cosmologies and Histories* (manuscript in preparation).

thousands of years, long before the early immigrant settlements by Han seafarers from Fujian Province in China, who came from the 16th and 17th centuries onward; or the early colonizing efforts by the Portuguese in the south-west of Taiwan. From 1895 to 1945 Japan imposed colonial rule equally on the Han (and Hakka) settler populations and on the indigenous Austronesians (often described in the ethnographic literature as "Aborigines"). The mountain-dwelling Austronesians were often relocated in coastal areas where they could be more effectively "controlled". Later again, in 1949, the retreating remnants of Kuomintang (Guomindang) forces, under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, arrived and took over the government, spreading the use of the Mandarin language and a dictatorial form of political control that lasted until 1986 (Szonyi, 2005: 88). Today (in 2007), the originally Austronesian-speaking groups all contain large numbers of fluent Mandarin-speakers; and patterns of intermarriage with Han populations have greatly modified their appearance and their practices. Yet they, too, are currently investing powerfully in reassertions of their cultural differences from others. They also retain and combine numerous features which they had adopted from contact with Han and Japanese practices. This example from Taiwan reinforces the point that in spite of long accretions of cultural change, cultural practices can come alive again, not as pristine elements but as creatively recombined ones. The chapters in the present book on Uyghur practices convey the same message. It is particularly important to stress here that in complex situations we cannot expect to gain a unified picture of identity. There are many individual, local, and regional variations, resulting from a "mix and match" of layered practices, selectively appropriated and contextually expressed. Sean Roberts' chapter (ch.11) in this book vividly illustrates this process of "contextualized expression", as we may call it (see also his chapter "Toasting Uyghurstan", Roberts, 2005, in Stewart and Strathern eds., 2005b).

Each author in this notable volume makes a contribution to these complex themes. Ildikó Bellér-Hann shows an acute awareness of the potential effects of ethnographic descriptions of customs. For example, emphasis on practices of venerating the dead could be used to assimilate Uyghur to Han practices. In the Islamic context, shrine pilgrimages are opposed by separatist militants who otherwise may advocate Islamic custom; but the Chinese authorities also oppose these pilgrimages, thinking that they are vehicles for separatism. Soviet scholars in the 1920s promoted the idea of a "Turkic identity" for the Uyghurs; but the Chinese and Uyghur versions of history disagree, for example, on the historical depth of settlement in the Xinjiang region. Legends become the contested basis for legitimizing or delegitimizing these different versions of history. Boundaries themselves become foci for defense and attack. Names of persons and places enter into these contests in crucial ways, because they encapsulate rhetorics of history and meaning. This again is a point that holds true in many places around the world.

To compare again areas where we have conducted research in Ireland and Taiwan, we can note that in the Republic of Ireland, in areas known as the Gaeltacht or Gaelic-speaking areas, place names are expected to appear in their Gaelic forms. But in one place, Dingle, there was actually resistance to the name being converted into Gaelic because the name Dingle was known to tourists who brought money into the area. In Taiwan, the indigenous groups we have referred to above and in

our writings are currently reviving the indigenous-language names for their local territories and villages, as a part of their campaign to secure their land rights and to gain recognition for their separate identities. Conquerors always impose their own names on places, and the restoration of earlier names re-creates local pride and reverses the earlier effects of imperial power.

Nations come into being and pass away through their names. "Lithuania" was for hundreds of years a Grand Duchy, and was then at various times after 1795 absorbed into the Soviet Union; now it is a democratically governed nation-state within the European Union. Complexities of naming are found also at the level of personal names, as Äsäd Sulayman shows in his chapter (ch. 6, this volume). Sulayman points to the fluidity with which surnames have been created, in contexts where the father's name turns into an inherited surname. Similar issues turn up in Papua New Guinea, another one of our research areas,[4] and are generated out of the "officializing strategies" of bureaucracies which demand written forms of names and the stable state-based identification of individuals by these means. In the time of the Kuomintang government (prior to their defeat by the Communists in China) problems emerged in the written forms of Uyghur names through the use of only three Chinese characters to represent them. Exactly the same problem, we have found in our contemporary fieldwork among the Paiwan Austronesian people in Taiwan, emerged from the difficulties of representing Paiwan names in Mandarin on official documents. Hence people were given Chinese names, and it has been difficult for them to restore their indigenous names on their records.

Uyghur food traditions are another focus of conflict and complexity. On the one hand there is widespread acceptance of influences from various areas; on the other, some dishes come to be regarded as signatures of identity (Cesàro, ch. 10, this volume) – "lamb kebabs" for the Uyghurs (and "haggis" in a certain sense for the Scots, we may add here). Cesàro points out that one Uyghur dish, *polo*, is a dish widely spread in Central Asia, but local emotion and belief make it Uyghur for the Uyghurs. Another dish, *laghman*, a kind of wheat noodle with topping, probably comes from China. Even if a food is Chinese in origin, its preparation by a Uyghur cook in accordance with *halal* rules makes it Uyghur. Agency and cultural framing, not substance by itself, create identities.

Finally, there is the case of a kind of symbolic anomaly of cultural "border-crossers", the *Minkaohan*, or Sinicized Uyghurs educated in the Chinese language. Some Uyghurs have to stress this aspect of their identity in order to secure jobs for themselves in an economic environment dominated by the Han. Joanne Smith Finley in her chapter (ch. 12, this volume) refers to this category of people as "modern Uyghur survivors". It is an apt characterization and one that would apply well *mutatis mutandis* to many Taiwanese indigenous Austronesian-speakers with whom we work:

4 Papua New Guinea has been a place that Strathern and Stewart have worked in for several decades. See, for example, Strathern, A. and Stewart, P.J., 2004, *Empowering the Past, Confronting the Future: The Duna People of Papua New Guinea*. For, Contemporary Anthropology of Religion Series, New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan; and Strathern, A. and Stewart, P.J., 2000, *Arrow Talk: Transaction, Transition, and Contradiction in New Guinea Highlands History*, Kent, Ohio and London: The Kent State University Press.

with the difference that, most recently, the advantages have for them swung the other way. Now, it is useful in Taiwan to claim an indigenous identity in many contexts of applying for grants for community development. This is because the indigenous identities are now promoted as emblematic of a wider Taiwanese identity. They are in step with a nationalist project. The Uyghurs do not find themselves in so fortunate a position. The Chinese state authorities readily grant them status as a "minority nationality", but not as a "Turkic nation" in their own right. As a "nation" in that sense, they would be anomalous within the Chinese state, rather than emblematic of it, as the Taiwanese indigenous groups have currently become emblematic of the nation within Taiwan. As a "minority nationality" by contrast, the Uyghurs could be seen, along with other such "ethnic minorities", as a part of the broad mosaic of identities that makes up "China", in the sense of a "multi-cultural state".

We are dealing here with issues of anomaly and ambiguity of identity broached by Smith Finley (ch. 12, this volume), referring to the classic theory of purity and danger enunciated by Mary Douglas (Douglas, 1966). An anomaly is a category that does not fit neatly or completely into one categorical box of classification, but cross-cuts or confuses at least two such boxes, in this case the boxes of "Turkic" versus "Chinese" identity. Douglas points out that belonging to just one classificatory box may be seen as "safe" or "pure". By definition, then, belonging, or potentially belonging, to two or more such boxes is liable to being seen as both "impure" and "dangerous". A "neither fish nor fowl" categorization may result in creatures being tabooed, shunned, or feared. Populations of people who have some senses of historical unity but are divided by political borders and may have been displaced or "trans-placed" (Stewart and Strathern, 2005a) over time are also peculiarly subject to such pejorative characterizations. The perception of them by others as dangerous stems partly from their very hybridity or duality. And this perception is likely to be enhanced if they actually display separatist ambitions. Empires are reluctant to let go of subjects unless the subjects prove altogether too difficult to subdue.

What is interesting here is that the perceptions we have been referring to are by and large those created by outsiders and imposed on the people (though the people may also internalize them as a source of induced "shame" about themselves). Generally, among themselves, a minority population may take pride in its own internal diversity, its own cultural achievements, and its own subtle finessing of political situations. For the people themselves the "neither fish nor fowl" label becomes transformed into "neither impure nor dangerous", just a complex understanding of their own political and cultural configurations.

For people like the Uyghurs we can advance a further idea, that their internal diversities and their intricate political histories make them into a micro-version of "cosmopolitans", used to border-crossing, negotiations, adaptations, and flexibilities in the ways of dealing with one another and with outsiders (see Strathern and Stewart, 2007b, n.d., for a discussion of our ideas on "cosmopolitanisms"). Their minority, enclaved, and dis-empowered position may empower them to develop an awareness of, and tolerance for, differences that equips them for a cosmopolitan world beyond the confines of their own area. A perception of their circumstances may also help them to understand the parallel circumstances of others like them on a global scale. In this regard they may provide a model of what we have called

"indigenous cosmopolitanism" (Strathern and Stewart, 2007b, n.d. and Goodale, 2007). Seeing them in this way may help us to understand them better in their own contexts of life, in their own right. The present volume is an excellent set of studies and it points in the same directions and gives to the Uyghurs the multi-dimensional picture of them that they deserve to have in the portrait galleries of world history and heritage.

Studies of social complexity of the kind we find in this volume enable us also to appreciate why there is a widespread move currently in anthropology to re-evaluate the idea of cosmopolitanism in general. Classic definitions of this term tie it to ultimately hegemonic, if not ethnocentric, viewpoints that stress the supposed contrast between "nativists" and "cosmopolites". What we more often find, however, in practice is that "nativists" are also trying to reach out to others beyond their borders; while cosmopolites retain ties of rootedness in relation to particular localities, even while they claim to transcend these and to present themselves as "citizens of the world". The Uyghur people may profitably be seen as examples of peoples who, through their own internal complexities, hold up to our view those processes of accommodation, adaptation, and contextual self-identification that enable true cosmopolitan modes of existence to come into being and flourish. Their separatist tendencies within the Chinese state are only a part of the picture. Their wider cultural history, as portrayed here, reveals them as prototypical cosmopolitans.

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Introduction

Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia

Ildikó Bellér-Hann, M. Cristina Cesàro, Rachel Harris and Joanne Smith Finley

Divergent Traditions of Scholarship

This edited volume explores the social and cultural hybridity or 'in-between-ness' of the Uyghurs, an officially recognized minority mainly inhabiting the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China, with significant populations also living in the Central Asian states. It seeks to bridge a perceived gap in our understanding of this group, which too often has fallen between two regional traditions of scholarship on Central Asia and China: Central Asian studies, with its focus on the post-Soviet Central Asian states, and Sinology.

The 'Great Game' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Central Asia was a historical period that stimulated intense political, economic, military and scholarly interest in the region then more commonly known as Chinese (or East) Turkestan and its oasis inhabitants, then commonly referred to as Turkis/Turks, Muslims or Sarts. This period of global strategic interest came to an end with the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and the region was for a time largely marginalized in Western scholarship. As China began to open up to the outside world in the 1980s, academic interest in what was now the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) flourished again. With the disintegration of the USSR in the early 1990s, the study of Central Asia made its own comeback as the region offered a comparatively accessible environment both for field study and archival research. Yet communication between the two new fields has so far been limited. Although scholars working on the post-Soviet Central Asian republics tacitly acknowledge cultural ties and continuities between the peoples of the former Soviet territories (Russian or West Turkestan) and the inhabitants of Xinjiang (Chinese or East Turkestan), they seldom concern themselves with the latter. Meanwhile, those who approach the study of Xinjiang from a sinologist's perspective rarely extend their research interests across China's north-western borders.

The principal reason for the lack of cross-fertilization is evidently related to the different linguistic backgrounds and abilities of scholars working on the respective regions. Sinologists are primarily trained in the Chinese language (making it easier to conduct fieldwork and access documentary data in the Chinese language), while Central Asia scholars tend to be trained in Russian and/or the Turkic-Altaic languages. While it is common to find scholars who combine their main expertise in Chinese or

Russian with (an often less thorough) knowledge of one or more Turkic languages and are thus equipped to tackle one or other of the two 'Turkestans', it is rare to find mastery of both Chinese and Russian in the same individual. Yet the phenomenon must also be due in part to other, cultural factors. To many Central Asia scholars, for example, the Uyghurs appear as an exotic extension of Central Asian Turkic-Islamic culture, one which does not fit comfortably within the post-Soviet, post-socialist framework of their enquiry. Another distinction between these comparatively new fields is that scholars working from the Central Asian perspective often tend to be interested in social and cultural practices and processes, focusing on things Uyghur, Central Asian, Turkic or Muslim, while those starting from a sinological perspective often have a predominantly territorial focus: Xinjiang (Chinese, lit. 'New Border' or 'New Dominion' of the Chinese polity), majority-minority configurations, Uyghur nationalism, repression, secession.

Public Representations

When the history, culture or the contemporary political situation of this region and this people emerge into the public sphere, their representations are equally schizophrenic. In May 2004 the British Library in London mounted a major exhibition, 'The Silk Road'.[1] Centred on the much contested discoveries of early Buddhist artefacts, frescos and manuscripts made by Sir Aurel Stein in the regions of Khotän and Dunhuang, the exhibition included many loans from the Chinese government, among them a recreation of a Dunhuang cave complete with Buddhist frescos. The term 'Uighur' [Uyghur] appeared only fleetingly, in reference to a Tibetan document written in the Old Uyghur script, while there was just one brief reference to the last millennia of Islamic culture in the region. Instead, a section of the exhibition entitled 'Play on the Silk Road' featured a 'Letter of Apology for Getting Drunk' from the kingdom of Gaochang, written in Chinese characters. The notes explained: 'By the eighth century there was a Chinese wine making industry using mare's teats grapes from Gaochang'. Contrast this with another major and extremely well attended exhibition, 'The Turks', held in the Royal Academy in London in the following year.[2] This exhibition included many loans from the Turkish government. Here the Uyghurs featured more prominently as an early stop-over on the march of Old Turkic, and subsequently Islamic, art which advanced via the Seljuks and Timurid Samarkand towards the glories of Ottoman Turkey. The exhibition included a ninth century fresco from the capital of the Uyghur kingdom of Khocho. It would have taken an observant visitor to both exhibitions to realize that Gaochang is in fact the Chinese name for Khocho, and that the kingdom in question was one and the same.[3] This is not to accuse either exhibition of deliberate misrepresentation,

1 http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/features/silkroad/main.html (accessed 23 August 2005).

2 http://www.turks.org.uk/ (accessed 23 August 2005).

3 In fact, and one must have some sympathy with the author of the entry, the name 'Kucha' (another city along the Silk Road further to the west, Qiuci in Chinese sources and Kösän in modern Uyghur) is given mistakenly on the 'Turks' website for Khocho (also sometimes written Kocho but never Kucha).

merely to note the strikingly different representations that can arise from differing perspectives, agendas and traditions of scholarship. The challenge lies in developing a vision of Uyghur history, society and culture which can encompass these multiple perspectives.

The 'Uyghur Problem'

The Uyghurs' in-between-ness arguably underpins the key problems which they, as a group, face today. The year 2004 brought a flurry of studies on the 'Uyghur problem', viewed from political and strategic perspectives, as the Central Asian region once again came to prominence in the global political arena (Dillon, 2004; Gladney, 2004; Millward, 2004). These studies focus on Uyghur separatism and unrest, and the rise of radical Islam; on China's ongoing 'Strike Hard' anti-separatist campaign; and on its manipulation of the 'global war on terror' as it colours Uyghur opposition to Chinese rule 'Islamic terrorism'. An edited volume on 'Xinjiang' (although it largely focuses on the Uyghurs) published in the same year, probes some of the historical, demographic, socio-economic and political issues in greater depth (Starr, 2004). Situating Xinjiang as China's 'borderlands', its authors argue that the Chinese state's penetration or 'domestication' of the region has accelerated during the 1990s, and with increasing rapidity into the twenty-first century (see also Becquelin, 2004). This 'domestication' of Xinjiang entails state attempts to establish continuities in demography, communications, and language, primarily through strategies of construction and development under the Western Development Policy (*Xibu da kaifa*), but also through the media and more coercive policies of control such as population transfer and education. The development of infrastructure, notably the extension of the railway to Qäshqär [Kashgar] bringing greater numbers of Chinese migrants into the Uyghur heartlands, and the growing insistence on the use of Chinese language as the medium of instruction, are the prime examples of this tendency (Dwyer, 2005). The stepping up of religious repression which in Xinjiang is especially targeting Islamic practices is a further example of coercive tendencies. These policies may be interpreted as leading inevitably to the acculturation of the Uyghurs, yet they are also contributing to the strengthening of Uyghur nationalist sentiment in reaction to perceived Han discrimination and increased Han competition for education, employment and resources.

Looking across the border, it was argued in the early 1990s that the newly independent Central Asian states would have a strong impact on political developments for the Uyghurs. These states, it was thought, would serve as models of independent governance, market capitalism and democracy, and also as new sites for Uyghur political organizations, which were expected to offer support to their 'ethnic brothers'. By 1996, scholars, international observers and analysts had begun to realize that these hopes were largely illusory, and were judging the states as failed models in their politics, economies and nationality policies. This notwithstanding, young Uyghurs in Xinjiang continued to be inspired toward their own secession movement at least until, and in some cases beyond, the Ghulja riots of February 1997. By the start of the new millennium, it was abundantly clear to both local and

international observers that, far from providing safe havens for Uyghur nationalists, the Central Asian states were increasingly complying with Chinese demands to crack down on Uyghur separatism, levied through the mechanism of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (see Dillon, 2004).

Problems with Names

As we suggested above with reference to the London exhibitions, the complex problems inherent in trying to 'situate the Uyghurs' are highlighted by the lack of agreement over names. The political arguments over the links between the contemporary Uyghur ethnic group and the pre-Islamic Old Uyghur kingdoms are well rehearsed, but the dual perspective remains constant. Chinese official histories place Uyghur roots in what is commonly termed the 'Western Regions' (Ch. *xiyu*), a term which clearly makes sense only when viewed from China.[4] Uyghur nationalist histories, on the other hand, reject the Chinese perspective on their homeland. Turghun Almas, in his influential history *The Uyghurs*, writes: 'One must state definitively: the motherland of the Uyghurs is Central Asia', a region which he describes as an 'ancient golden cradle of world culture' (see Bovingdon, 2004: 357–63). Meanwhile, Central Asians (both Soviet and post-Soviet) term the region 'East Turkestan' (viewed from the perspective of nineteenth-century Russian or West Turkestan), and Uyghur separatists remain divided in their preferences between the pan-Turkic 'East Turkestan' and the less inclusive 'Uyghuristan'. Both these names are of course banned in China, where Chinese histories of the East Turkestan Republic (1944–49) refer rather to the 'Three Districts Revolution' [Ch. *Sanqu geming*, U. *Üch wilayät inqilawi*].

These various binary oppositions expressed in the form of place names can be easily understood if we consider Xinjiang's position in terms of its present political subordination to China. Yet they mask far more complex historical processes. Toponyms are always politically loaded, and may at different times in history (and from the perspectives of different actors) be expressions of local identity, emblems of enforced state control, or indeed a locus of contested political power. Thus, although the generic name 'Xinjiang' is today used as a short-hand designation for the region by political power holders,[5] most of its inhabitants and outsiders, including the international scholarly community, it continues to be contested by Uyghur separatists and émigré groups pursuing a nationalist agenda. As a blanket term, the name 'Xinjiang', even in its full incarnation (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region), fails to do justice to the region's rich ethnic and cultural diversity, though the same could equally be said of the names of many of today's large nation-states. A brief glimpse at the history of toponyms in Xinjiang quickly dispels the notion either that territorial continuity presumed cultural continuity with China, or that this vast region itself enjoyed cultural and political homogeneity. As is well documented,

4 This term could be used to cover all the regions to the west of China, from the Middle East to South Asia, but was also used in a more specific sense to refer to the Tarim basin area.

5 *Shinjang*, the loan from Chinese, is regularly used in spoken and written Uyghur.

the name 'Xinjiang' (New Dominion) was imposed by the Manchus during the Qing period, and reflected the imperial perspective. By contrast, the designation of 'East Turkestan' represented the Russian view, which emphasized continuities with the other Turkic-speaking regions of Central Asia (West Turkestan). This Russian distinction between East and West Turkestan incorporated both the linguistic and cultural continuities connecting the two regions and the political/colonial boundaries separating them.

Yet even as cultural continuities drew together this vast terrain, it was characterized also by a sense of political disintegration. The names used for the oases of East Turkestan prior to Manchu occupation suggest a lack of unifying political structure, and this condition was reflected for some time in locally used terminology even following the region's formal incorporation into the Qing Empire in 1884. Indigenous sources dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries used the loose designation of 'Six Cities' (Altä Shähär) to refer to the oasis settlements south of the Tianshan (Heavenly Mountains), a term which simultaneously reflected a loose sense of shared features as well as the fragmented nature of the region as a whole. Fluctuations in local usage concerning the exact identity of the Six Cities suggest that the term denoted a rather general territory, and expressed the relative autonomy of the cities, the fluid nature of the connections between them, and their respective lack of fixed political rank. Xinjiang's toponyms also reflect changing religious beliefs over time. A late nineteenth century indigenous source gives epithets for the Six Cities, all projecting images of sacred places and the shrines of saints, simultaneously local and connected to the Islamic *umma* and the Middle East (Katanov, 1936: 1220–21).[6] That these epithets were of Arabic and Persian derivation suggests that the naming process embodied an implicit claim to exclusively Islamic religious traditions, as well as a desire to disclaim the pre-Islamic past to which the Old Uyghur Kingdoms belonged.

In this way, Xinjiang toponyms encapsulate both the contested, political nature of the symbolic appropriation of space and the multiplicity of cultural influences that have come to bear on the region throughout its troubled history. Political contestation over the region and, by extension, over its indigenous population, continues to play out today with Chinese names used in the public domain to denote places which Uyghurs and most other minorities refer to using traditional Turki designations (Qumul – Hami; Ghulja – Yining, and so on). These simple binary approaches are implicitly fostered by Chinese state discourse and explicitly reproduced by Uyghur actors situating themselves in terms of cultural difference from, and political opposition to, the Han. They may serve us well when positioning the (modern) Uyghurs as political – and politicized – beings. Yet they are deficient if our aim is to create a rounded picture of the Uyghurs as social and cultural actors, and one which

6 Qäshqär is listed as *Azizanä* or the City of the Saints; Yäkän [Yarkand] as *Piranä*, the City of Patron Saints; Khotän as *Shähidanä*, the City of the Martyrs (after the great number of martyrs buried there); Aqsu as *Ghaziyanä*, the City of the Ghazis (the Triumphant ones, after the Muslim fighters who victoriously fought for Islam), Kucha as *Güli-ullanä*, or the City of God's Governors (after the Muslim governors buried there); and Turpan as *Gharibanä*, the City of Strangers (after the many pilgrims to the numerous saintly shrines).

allows for continuity and change over time and space. In this latter endeavour, a broader, multi-faceted approach becomes necessary.

Dialogue across Borders

The majority of recent studies, then, have adopted the binary focus on Uyghur-Han political and cultural conflict, as suggested by the contemporary political situation in Xinjiang. They have rarely looked beyond the construction of Otherness of, and by, the Uyghurs in relation to the Han to consider the role of Central Asian culture (or indeed other cultures) in the shaping of Uyghur identity. With this volume we aim to fill this gap, approaching the Uyghurs with a focus on the dynamics of historical and contemporary contacts between China and Central Asia. We consider these contacts as they have been maintained through, for example, intermarriage, education, migration and trade; through shared institutions (Islamic, Turkic, political and socio-cultural) and during different historical periods (pre-colonial, colonial, socialist, and 'socialist market economy'). We hope that this perspective will afford fresh insights into the complexities of Uyghur social and cultural institutions over time, and open up new avenues for future studies of the region and its peoples.

This edited volume, like the international conference from which it arises, was conceived with the aim of promoting dialogue across national, disciplinary and linguistic borders, bringing together Xinjiang specialists who have hitherto worked in relative isolation, and narrowing the chasm between Sinologist and Central Asianist perspectives. It is hoped that the project will pave the way towards a new style of integrative research, leading to further collaborations among scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds and with different linguistic strengths to bring the Uyghurs to a more prominent position within Asian scholarship. The conference 'Situating the Uyghurs between China and Central Asia' was held at London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in November 2004. Invited speakers were asked to respond to the following questions:

- To what extent can Xinjiang's Turkic-speaking Uyghur Muslim population be described – or describe itself – as part of China and/or part of Central Asia?
- Beginning with the Qing administration, which first encouraged mass Han immigration to the region in 1821 and had by 1884 made Xinjiang an official province of China, how far has successive Chinese rule – imperial, republican, socialist – succeeded in disembedding the Uyghurs from the Central Asian cultural context and integrating them into China?
- As a result of almost 200 years of contextual change, have the Uyghurs now developed characteristics that render them 'culturally autonomous' from both Central Asia and the People's Republic?
- To what extent may Uyghurs be described as 'culturally hybrid'? Or do they rather negotiate dual and multiple identities that shift and change according to social and political contexts?

The twelve scholars whose revised and edited chapters appear in this volume address these questions from a range of disciplinary perspectives including history, anthropology, sociology, literary studies and musicology. All the contributors have an intimate knowledge of the region based on long-term stay, library and archival research, while several Uyghur contributors offer rare insiders' views. The volume's emphasis on micro-level, fieldwork-based approaches provides a wealth of original and detailed material which, due to the constraints typically placed on scholars working in this region, previous publications have often failed to deliver. Methods such as case study permit an understanding of current identities (social, cultural, religious) as they are experienced by the actors themselves (Roberts, Smith Finley, Waite). The micro-approach is complemented in other chapters by a focus on the complicated interplay of larger cultural currents, which may remain hidden from local actors but which concern issues that are meaningful to them. Popular literature (Friederich), 'national' and local musical traditions (Light, Harris), food practices (Cesàro), and life cycle rituals (Bellér-Hann) are all important constituents of modern Uyghur identity, which despite evolving through multiple cultural influences may nonetheless become articulated as 'our traditions'. While in some chapters the Central Asian component of Uyghur identity remains comparatively implicit, those chapters that explicitly address the tripartite structure suggested by the conference/volume title often end up challenging this neat classification. In one way or another, each chapter implicitly addresses the larger issue of the tension between that dimension of social reality experienced by actors and that which remains hidden and lies beyond their control and agency. The historians have concentrated on larger currents invisible to actors, cautioning that representations of the Uyghurs must always be considered within the specific historical context in which they were produced (Kamalov, Newby). On the other hand, two of the Uyghur authors present cases in which the Uyghurs explicitly emerge as active shapers of their own destiny: the ongoing debate surrounding name and surname reform (Sulayman) and local responses to the promotion of Muslim shrines as tourist sites (Dawut). Here, the background of the authors is significant, as the Uyghurs are presented as agents rather than helpless victims of the current political situation.

Some of the authors in this volume have chosen to adopt a comparative framework in order to tease out the links and correspondences (or lack of them) between Uyghur and Central Asian/Chinese cultures, but each voices caution about the comparative endeavour. As Ildikó Bellér-Hann argues in her chapter, highlighting the centrality of the veneration of the dead among the Uyghurs may inadvertently supply apologists of Chinese political and cultural hegemony over Xinjiang with new material. On the other side of the border in the independent Central Asian republics, pointing out commonalities among the Turkic groups may serve as a good antidote to former Soviet nationality policies (which, through emphasizing real or imagined differences, were largely responsible for the emergence of modern Central Asian ethnic groups), but it may also serve pan-Turkic ideologies. The chapters gathered in this volume have no such agendas. None of the authors embraces extreme cultural relativism or universalism. They do try to go beyond the simple binary oppositions (*Han v Uyghur*) and comparisons (assumed affinities between Uyghurs and Central Asians) to substantiate or refute assumptions and claims of similarity and difference.

The editors have made no attempt to impose a single unified viewpoint on the authors. The result is that while several chapters stress cultural continuities with Central Asian peoples, practices and experiences over time, attention is also given to differences (real or perceived) between the Uyghurs of Xinjiang and other Central Asian groups, and to examples of accommodation, adaptation and compromise between Uyghurs and Han Chinese. Indeed, one of the most interesting aspects of the conference 'Situating the Uyghurs' was the striking contrast between speakers in their attitudes and assumptions, depending on their scholarly background and/or sphere of enquiry. The conference, which was well attended by Uyghur students and residents in the UK, also brought home to us the sensitivities of discussing aspects of Han acculturation with a Uyghur audience. In a field where politics is all but inescapable, it is hard to state as matters of simple fact that, for example, Uyghurs have absorbed many foodways from the Chinese, but are very little influenced by Chinese music. Is it possible that a search for the meanings behind this might conclude innocently that Chinese music is indigestible and Central Asian cuisine dull? This volume arises out of, and continues, that ongoing dialogue.

The Chapters

Drawing on a combination of fieldwork in Uyghur communities in Xinjiang and historical research into the nature of 'tradition' in the pre-socialist era, Bellér-Hann attempts to substantiate the hitherto tacit assumption of cultural links between the Uyghur and other Turkic-speaking Central Asian groups through looking at life cycle rituals in their historical contexts. Her enquiry also draws on ethnographic parallels from Han Chinese culture, and suggests that levels of difference must be distinguished if we are to allow for human diversity without losing sight of broad underlying commonalities and examples of accommodation and cultural borrowing. She argues against the constraints imposed by binary oppositions, and calls for the inclusion of other groups (such as the Hui) into the enquiry, who may hold the key to understanding the complicated interplay between Han and Uyghur cultural practices.

The Kazakhstan-based Uyghur historian, Ablet Kamalov, contributes a strongly argued and thoroughly sourced contention that modern Uyghur national identity was initiated in and largely shaped by Russian Central Asia. Both this and the British historian Laura Newby's chapter serve as important counter-balances to the oft-cited contention that Uyghur national identity is largely created by, or in response to, the Chinese state (Gladney, 1990). Based on detailed reading of Qing sources, Newby asserts that a sense of community and discrete identity was shared by the peoples of the Altä Shähär (Six Cities, contemporary southern Xinjiang) as early as the eighteenth century, and that this was promoted by inter-oasis trade and marriage, and Qing policies including population transfer. While she acknowledges the commonly accepted view that the ethnonym 'Uyghur' fell into disuse following the fall of the Uyghur Khocho kingdom and re-emerged only in the twentieth century, she argues that the absence of an ethnonym does not preclude a shared sense of identity.

The flipside of the commonplace assumption of the recent nature of Uyghur national identity is the notion of powerful local or 'oasis' identities, Qäshqärliq, Turpanliq, etc. (Rudelson, 1997). These local or vernacular identities within contemporary Uyghur culture are emphasized in only one of the chapters, in the context of musical traditions. Rachel Harris takes a detailed look at the music of the Twelve Muqam to debunk the various hotly contended myths about their origins. Arguing that they are neither 'Arab music' nor 'of the Western Regions' (*Xiyu*), she instead situates the various local Uyghur Muqam traditions (Qäshqär-Yäkän, Turpan, Dolan, etc.) within a mosaic of distinct yet inter-related local musical traditions practised by peoples across the Central Asian region. Harris also expresses ambivalence about the comparative project, warning that comparison of de-contextualized cultural products (a popular activity with early twentieth century comparative musicologists) is fruitless if their performance contexts and meanings are not taken into account.

As discussions arising from the conference demonstrated, the Uyghurs' 'in-between-ness' soon escapes the neat China-Central Asia dichotomy. In his recent edited volume, Frederick Starr discusses the 'external gravitational fields' which exert force on the region of Xinjiang, commenting that 'it is hard to find another region on which such diverse cultural forces have been so consistently exerted' (Starr, 2004: 7). From the penetration of Buddhism from India to the advent of Islam from the Arab-Persian world; from the waves of early nomadic invaders and settlers who entered the region from Siberia, to periods of Chinese dynastic rule under the Han and Tang; from nineteenth century Russian models of modernity and reform to the global information networks and cultural flows through which Uyghurs today are circumventing their oft-cited position in China's backyard, clearly any consideration of Uyghur 'in-between-ness' must take into account multiple spheres of influence and interaction.

Several of the chapters consider the impact and reception of globalized currents in Uyghur culture and society. Michael Friederich considers a range of cultural influences on the work of contemporary Uyghur poets. His chapter alerts us to the possibility of multiple and shifting interpretations of 'east' and 'west', as he argues that the Uyghurs' historical westward orientation (first towards the Islamic world, then the Russian sphere) has been replaced under the PRC by a circuitous flow of literary stylistic influence emanating from Europe and arriving in Xinjiang via Beijing. The most controversial example of global flows entering the Uyghur sphere is, of course, the penetration of new forms of Islam ranging from reformism to militancy. Edmund Waite brings a rare fieldwork-based perspective to bear on this much debated subject. In his discussion of the changing nature and sources of religious authority in contemporary Qäshqär, he argues that varying degrees of religious repression and secularization practised under PRC rule formerly served to isolate the religious community and promote the local authority of the mosque community. Following the opening of Xinjiang's borders in 1987, however, this local authority has been increasingly challenged by reformist ideologies which emanate from Saudi Arabia and arrive in Qäshqär via Central Asia. Working on the other side of the border with a Uyghur community in Almaty in Kazakhstan, Sean Roberts also discusses changing understandings of Islam. He explores the complex

question of the interaction of faith with ethnic national consciousness, and argues that local identity is shaped by a multiplicity of cultural influences emanating from Islam, China, and the Soviet and post-socialist experience.

The contradictions inherent in these competing strands of influence on Uyghur culture also underlie contemporary issues of development. One important aspect of China's domestication of Xinjiang is the fast-growing industry of Han Chinese tourism in the region. Rahilä Dawut's chapter, based on a wide-ranging field survey, discusses the problems arising from attempts to re-brand Islamic shrines as tourist attractions. Dawut considers local reactions to the contradictory trends of the pull of tradition and the promotion of tourism, showing local people to be creative actors rather than pawns in a political game. She argues that the Xinjiang authorities' mistrust of shrine pilgrimage, which they equate with Islamic militancy, is fundamentally misplaced and arises out of official misconceptions of the different strands of Islam in the region; in fact the militants fiercely oppose shrine pilgrimage. Her chapter also highlights the lack of continuity between policies in inner China and in Xinjiang, contrasting the liberal policy on Han Chinese temple fairs with the ongoing official mistrust of Uyghur shrine festivals.

Äsäd Sulayman's chapter offers a valuable inside view on emerging local debates concerning the need to reform Uyghur name and surname practices. Though the ongoing debate may appear to be a purely linguistic discussion, it in fact encapsulates many of the dilemmas of the Uyghurs caught amid contrastive political and socio-cultural systems. Stemming from the need to address the practical problems of fitting Uyghur names written in the Arabic script into a national bureaucratic system based on names composed of two or three Chinese characters, the local debate on surname reform has developed to encompass the notion of 'civilized-ness' (Ch. *wenming*; U. *mädiniyätlik*), so prevalent in Chinese public discourse. Yet intellectuals recently put forward a recommendation that seems to highlight the contested nature of notions of civilization: their proposition that Uyghurs should adopt a system of fixed, hereditary patronymics *such as those used by English-speaking nations* implies that name practices are just one more cultural space in Xinjiang that has been politically coloured. A prominent Uyghur musician, when outlining some similarities between Uyghur melodies on the one hand and Turkish and Japanese melodies on the other, once observed pointedly to one of the editors (Smith Finley): 'Some peoples' cultures resemble one another more closely than others'. In the same way, urban, secular Uyghurs have tended to desire to align themselves with the West rather than with China.

Sulayman's chapter is important in emphasizing that the project to 'situate the Uyghurs' is in no way confined to the efforts of the authors in this volume. Similarly, this volume does not presume to impose on a passive people an outsider view of their situation. Uyghur intellectuals, cultural leaders and decision makers are engaged in various ways in ongoing attempts to situate and re-situate Uyghur culture even within the restrictive framework of the Chinese polity, and their efforts are discussed and debated in the wider community. Other chapters in this volume consider the issues surrounding some of these efforts from an outsider's perspective. Nathan Light traces the changing metaphors that Uyghur writers, artists and musicians use in their discourses to define the group and its practices. Focusing

especially on the canonization of the Twelve Muqam, he contrasts official attempts to shape the meanings attached to this musical repertoire with individual responses to, and subversions of, these official tropes. Light's prime concern is to highlight the contradictions and negotiations which underlie the surface of ethnic identity construction.

Two chapters respond specifically to issues surrounding Chinese acculturation of the Uyghurs, reminding us that the Uyghurs are not simply passive victims of policies of domestication, but agents who negotiate multiple and hybrid identities in reaction to Chinese state policies. Cristina Cesàro's starting point is the emic view which considers food culture to be one of the most obvious distinguishing features of Uyghur identity. She goes on to discuss Han Chinese influences on the Uyghur diet, and the negotiations surrounding what is today considered distinctive 'Uyghur' cuisine. It is indicative of the paths of Uyghur nationalism as well as the paths of Chinese influence that Chinese food terms are now more current in the distant, southern oasis of Qäshqär than in the regional capital Ürümchi, which has a majority Han population. Just as cultural borrowings tend to originate in the area of greatest contact between Hans and Uyghurs and trickle down to the rest of the region, so too the reactive nationalist impulse to absorb and recast these borrowings as 'authentic' Uyghur cultural capital occurs first where exposure is most acute.

These reactive counter-trends to Han Chinese influence are highlighted in Joanne Smith Finley's analysis of the special position of the *minkaohan* (Ch. Uyghurs educated in the Chinese language). The *minkaohan* (sometimes known as 'Xinjiang's fourteenth nationality') are considered by most actors – *minkaohan* themselves, other Uyghurs, Han Chinese – to be neither wholly Uyghur nor wholly Chinese. Smith Finley's detailed case study of the life experiences of one woman illustrates the conflicts of loyalty and internalized oppression of the *minkaohan* experience. This group is both the best situated to take advantage of China's development policy, and at the same time arguably the group that suffers most from the Uyghurs' in-betweenness. Räwia (the subject of Smith Finley's case study) actually strengthened her sense of ethnic affiliation over the course of the 1990s in response to her perception of Han discrimination, turning back to the Uyghur language and to Islam via the education and upbringing of her daughter. Over the same period, she secured a position where she could deploy her dual identity to maximum effect within the frame of the Chinese state. In her final analysis, Smith Finley is upbeat about the future of the urban youth: 'The pride she [Räwia] displayed when speaking of her *minkaomin* (Uyghur-language educated) daughter's perfect command of both Uyghur and Chinese suggested that she had begun to envisage a middle way for the new generation: the potential for them to be simultaneously 100 per cent Uyghur (in the sense of being Central Asian) and 100 per cent Han (in the sense of being Chinese)'. Such an endeavour is certainly not easy, and will require strongly supportive state policies for individuals if it is to be achieved, but this may be the best hope that the Uyghurs can at present envisage.

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PART 1
The Historical Perspective

Chapter 1

'Us and Them' in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Xinjiang

Laura J. Newby

Introduction

Can there be anything more to be said about Uyghur identity? From cultural-primordial links with ancient mummies to a circumstantial politically based ethnicity, from a shifting locally rooted identity to one crystallized and homogenized by state policies, there can be few theories of ethnicity and identity that have not been applied in recent years to the peoples now commonly known as Uyghurs.[1] Some of these theories are undoubtedly mutually exclusive, but many if not all have added something valuable to our understanding of not merely the ethnic, but the cultural, social and political identity of the Uyghurs.

Clearly, much of the interest in Uyghur identity and ethnicity has been fuelled by contemporary political concerns and a theory of nationalism that stresses the link between ethnicity and the modern ethnic state, potential or otherwise (e.g. Gladney, 1990). But why should historians wish to become embroiled in this quagmire of political sensitivity? Setting aside any interest, or irritation, in the reworking of the past by the creators of nationalist histories, it seems to me that there are at least two reasons why historians ought to care about the way in which people have thought about and defined themselves. First, because any call on loyalties that extended beyond the obvious level of kinship, village or locality is vital to an understanding of why people acted, or failed to act, at particular times, and thus why change occurred or failed to occur at a specific juncture. And second, because despite the fact that the intellectual (notably theoretical) flow in recent years has tended to be from modern to historical studies, history – history which is not a response to the requirements or popular trends of the present – still holds the power to influence the way we look at a contemporary problem or, at the very least, to reveal that what is regarded as a modern development or phenomenon, may actually have deep historical roots. I am not about to argue that the mummies of the Taklamakan Desert are the ancestors of the modern Uyghurs, nor indeed that their Uyghur identity is so fragile an invention that it is held together by a sticky label marked 'Made in China'. My point is a

1 For purposes of simplicity I have used the anachronistic ethnonym Uyghur (in inverted commas) throughout the chapter as shorthand for 'sedentary Turkic Muslims of East *Turkestan/Xinjiang*'. The terms East Turkestan and Xinjiang are used as fitting and without political prejudice.

comparatively minor one; in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the people of the oases of Altä Shähär did not simply think of themselves as people of this or that oasis,[2] but shared a discrete group consciousness, which extended to the sedentary Turkic Muslims north of the Tianshan and west to the region of Qumul and Turpan, so-called Uyghuristan.[3] In other words, just as labelling may help to create group consciousness, the absence of a label, in this case an ethnonym, does not preclude the sense of a common identity that may comprise all those elements regularly found in the hotchpotch of ethnicity.[4] While it is definitely not my intention to suggest that in eighteenth or nineteenth century East Turkestan loyalty resided in the 'nation', group identity can and did precede national consciousness and by the eighteenth century it is clear that it rose above the oasis, i.e., there existed a sense of community among the people whom we now refer to as Uyghurs that was discrete and did not extend to other peoples.

'Them'

We have long been familiar with the notion that the group is defined through its relationship to others, i.e., outsiders. As Eriksen (1993) has stated, 'The first fact of ethnicity is the application of systematic distinctions between insiders and outsiders; between Us and Them'. Physical appearance, language, economic livelihood, religion and rituals regularly feature on the ethno-spectrum of difference and although there may be no sliding scale of importance, where all of these elements are found to differ the boundary between Us and Them is generally at its most impermeable. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to discover that in eighteenth and nineteenth century Xinjiang clear boundaries existed between the sedentary Turkic Muslims of Altä Shähär and Uyghuristan and the non-Turkic groups such as the Hindustanis, Armenians, Jews, Mongols, Manchus, Han Chinese, and even Sino-Muslims with whom they came into close contact. It may be worth pointing out, however, that despite the considerable emphasis that scholars have placed on the regional divisions of Xinjiang (e.g. Forbes, 1987 and Rudelson, 1997), and the various cultural influences on different areas,

2 The notion that the peoples of East Turkestan thought of themselves primarily as being of this or that oasis may well have originated in the early twentieth century with Barthold who noted that when asked to state his identity a Turkestani will reply 'first a "Muslim", then an inhabitant of such or such city or village…'. (cited by Shahrani, 1984: 26.) This has been echoed repeatedly in various forms by scholars throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, specifically with regard to the peoples of East Turkestan, e.g. 'As a whole the people of Eastern Turkestan had no common ethnic designation for themselves other than *yärlik*, which merely means local… Even foreign Muslims did not see the Eastern Turkestanis together as a distinct ethnic group'. (Fletcher, 1978: 69); 'Uyghurs still identify themselves according to the oasis in which they live, and perceived differences between the oases are extremely significant' (Rudelson, 1997: 40).

3 Although the term 'Uyghuristan' was probably only current from the ninth century to the fifteenth century at the latest, I have employed it throughout as shorthand for the Qumul-Turpan region. See Elias and Ross (1895: 99–114).

4 The ethnonym Uyghur (Uighur) was not, of course, adopted until the early twentieth century. See Fletcher (1968: 364, note 96).

there is no indication that this has had a significant impact on the self-identity of the Turkic Muslims in these areas. Thus, for example, although Hindustani influence has traditionally been strong in the region stretching from Yäkän to Khotän (Rudelson, 1997: 39–45), significantly there is no indication that the peoples of these oasis cities forged stronger social or cultural bonds with the peoples of Hindustan than with the Turkic Muslims of, for example, Aqsu. Similarly, while many Turkic Muslims, notably from the region of Uyghuristan, may have served the Chinese political cause and interacted with Han Chinese over several generations, this did not make them in any sense Chinese rather than 'Uyghur' and, indeed, the two communities remained divided by a clearly defined institutionalized relationship.

If geography did not detract from the Turkic Muslim identity, genes did. Marital and non-marital relationships between Turkic Muslims (primarily female) and those of non-autochthonous groups (primarily male) were not unusual in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[5] Though frequently abandoned by their 'foreign' fathers, the children of these relationships who remained in the region did not easily escape their foreign origin. I shall return to this point later. On the other hand, among at least one section of the community, there were some who elected to assume a foreign identity. Many of the beks (i.e., local officials serving in the Qing administration) chose to adopt certain 'Chinese' traits such as speaking Manchu, wearing Qing dress and worshipping at Chinese altars. This more often than not, however, was a strategic political act and if there were instances where a blurring of identity (rather than mere political loyalty) occurred, it was particular, i.e., it was restricted to individuals rather than groups or communities.[6]

Ethnic boundaries are like hedges; they are never totally impenetrable but the thicker they are, the harder it is for large numbers to move through them. So what of the relationship between the oasis dwellers of Xinjiang and other Turkic Muslims, where the hedge may be considered at its most spindly? Traditionally, the most significant divide between the peoples of Central Asia was not along so-called 'ethnic lines', but between the sedentary and nomadic communities and thus between different modes of economic production or lifestyle. This distinction was and is pertinent in that it reflects a historical trend that defined Central Asia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the struggle between sedentarist and nomadic society was at its height.[7] Here again, it is probably unnecessary to detail that the sedentary dwellers of the Altä Shähär oases thought of themselves as separate from the Turkic Muslim Kazakhs or Kyrgyz who were nomadic, or partially nomadic, spoke a distinct if related language, and possessed their own style of dress,

5 Relationships between local women and garrison soldiers were not uncommon, despite the fact that the Qing authorities frequently forbade such liaisons and took a dim view of miscegenation. Relationships between local women and foreign traders, including non-Turkic Muslims, were also commonplace. See for example, Bellér-Hann (forthcoming) who cites a marriage between an *Altä shähär* Muslim woman and a Hindustani.

6 Interestingly, so-called acculturation worked both ways and on occasions Sino-Muslims were discovered to have assumed the dress, language and customs of the Turkic Muslims – presumably also for pragmatic reasons. See Millward (1998: 160).

7 For a discussion of the tensions between tribal organizations and sedentary societies at this time, see Togan (1998: 1–16).

rituals, myths and so on. The sedentary dwellers lived alongside the nomads, traded with them, and occasionally struck up close friendships and alliances with them, but did not generally inter-marry.[8]

Among neighbouring Turkic Muslims, there were none with whom the sendentary communities of Xinjiang had a closer relationship than the Khoqandis, or Andijanis. Long before the Qing conquest and the consolidation of the khanate of Khoqand in the late eighteenth century, the people of the Tarim Basin were trading with a Turkic Muslim peoples to whom they referred as Andijanis. Andijan is a town to the northwest of Qäshqär (in present-day Uzbekistan), but this was the name ascribed by the oasis dwellers of Altä Shähär to those who came from any of the cities or villages beyond the western Pamirs, in the Ferghana Valley. Indistinguishable from the oasis dwellers of Xinjiang in physical appearance and, by and large, in terms of dress, diet, rituals and religion,[9] in the nineteenth century, it was not unknown for travellers and writers to imply or indeed assert that the Sarts of the Ferghana Valley and the 'Uyghurs' of Altä Shähär were essentially one people.[10] But for Turkic Muslims of Altä Shähär in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, geography was an important marker.

Under the rule of the Zunghar Mongols large numbers of Khoqandi traders had already settled in Altä Shähär. Many took wives from Altä Shähär and fathered children there, but they were still identified by the local community as outsiders and the children of such liaisons were known as 'chalgurts', i.e., 'half-breeds'. Yet, there does not appear to have been any social stigma attached to the Khoqandis, nor to inter-marrying with them. In the early eighteenth century many people from Altä Shähär were apparently only too happy to marry their daughters to Khoqandis. Not only were these traders relatively prosperous, but when and if they travelled back to Khoqand they tended to leave their wives and daughters in Altä Shähär.[11] Thus,

8 I base this comment about inter-marriage not least on my reading of documents held in the First Historical Archives (Beijing) relating to domestic disputes in Xinjiang. I have to date found no reference to inter-marriage between sedentary dwellers and nomads, or semi-nomads, despite the fact that personal backgrounds and places of origin are often provided in detail. This does not, of course, mean that such marriages never occurred.

9 I am, of course, here referring to the common Turkic Muslim culture of Central Asia as observed and recorded by outsiders.

10 See, for example, Fletcher who makes reference to a Siberian Tatar merchant who traded in Xinjiang in the first quarter of the nineteenth century and referred to all East and West Turkestanis as 'Uzbeks' (Fletcher, 1978: 69). However, far more frequently travellers commented on how the peoples of East Turkestan differed from their neighbours to the west, in character and custom. For the peoples of East Turkestan and the Ferghana Valley themselves, there were specific features of dress, speech, etc., by which they could identify an individual as originating from one area or the other (see text below). Most notably, the 'Andijanis' were easily recognizable in East Turkestan by the distinct dialect of the Ferghana Valley.

11 One reason for this was that many Khoqandi traders had two families, one in Khoqand and one in Altä Shähär. Boys born of relationships with Altä Shähäri women were apparently taken back to Khoqand but daughters and wives remained. *Manwen dang'an* (First Historical Archives, Beijing) 3512–020,160-3171, Qianlong 60.9.

contrary to the virilocal tradition, daughters married to Khoqandis were rarely 'lost' – a pleasing prospect for many Altä Shähäri parents.

With the Qing conquest of Xinjiang and the consolidation of the khanate of Khoqand, the pre-existing psychological and geographical boundary between the two regions was buttressed by policies such as travel restrictions on traders and the establishment of check points (Ma. *karun* Ch. *kalun*), not to mention the expulsion of hundreds of Khoqandi families from Altä Shähär in 1828. Even the common cause of endeavouring to oust the Qing infidel from Altä Shähär and support for the Äfäqī khojas could not dissolve the notion of Us and Them that defined relations between the Khoqandis and the Altä Shähäris. In revolt after revolt from the 1820s to 1840s, tensions arose between the Khoqandis and the local population of Altä Shähär.[12] By the 1840s, the strong identification of the khoja leaders with Khoqand was losing them the support of the local Altä Shähäri population.[13] This was evident not only in the reticence of the local populace to support the revolt of the Seven Khojas in 1847, but again when Välī-khän khoja took control of Qäshqär in 1857. Välī-khän who had lived most, if not all, of his life in Khoqand was reviled by the local people of Altä Shähär, not merely for his cruelty and because he appointed Khoqandis to all the highest posts in his administration, but also for his policies which reflected the customs of Khoqand, and were alien to Altä Shähär. According to Valikhanov (repr. 1962):

> Because the customs of Qäshqär differed from those of Khoqand, they were displeasing to the khoja, and he repressed them. The national costume (*natsional'nyĭ kostium*) was prohibited; the women had to cover their hair with a white scarf, in the way that the Andijanis [Khoqandis] did and were not allowed to go out unveiled. They were also forbidden to plait their hair, and the police kept a strict eye on this. If they violated this rule their braids were cut off. Males from the age of six had to wear a turban and to visit the mosque regularly, which the people of Qäshqär were not accustomed to doing.

Similarly, the Khoqandi Ya'qūb Bek, who ruled much of Xinjiang from 1864 to 1877, was considered a foreigner. Like Välī-khän he filled his government with Khoqandi officials whose abuses and extortions made them the scourge of the local people – even to the extent that, as the following poem suggests, some welcomed the return of Qing rule:

> From Peking the Chinese came, like stars in the heaven.
> The Andijanis rose and fled, like the pigs in the forest.
> They came in vain and left in vain, the Andijanis!
> They went away scared and languidly, the Andijanis!
> Everyday they took a virgin, and

12 Yet despite this growing animosity, many hundreds of Altä Shähäris fled to Khoqand in the wake of the revolts where, significantly, they remained a strongly self-conscious community.

13 The khoja leaders were the descendants of Burhän al-Dīn and Khōja-Jahän, the Äfäqī khojas who fled into exile when the Qing troops advanced into Altä Shähär in 1759. From the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century, their descendants made several attempts (frequently with Khoqandi support) to regain control of Altä Shähär.

They went hunting for beauties.
They played with dancing boys (*bacha*),
Which the Holy Law has forbidden.[14]

It must, therefore, be concluded that the policies and historical experiences that accompanied the first 100-odd years of Qing rule in Xinjiang and the simultaneous consolidation of the khanate of Khoqand over the Ferghana Valley contributed to a hardening of the *pre-existing* boundaries.

But the Khoqandis were not the only group who even when they had lived for two or more generations in the Tarim Basin and inter-married with local people could not shed their foreign status. Another example of outsiders who were still singled out for their 'foreignness' after several generations were the so-called Ghalchas. The term Ghalcha originally referred to the Mountain Tajiks but in Altä Shähär, at least, it seems to have come to refer to all foreign slaves. Slavery in Central Asia persisted until well into the twentieth century, and most societies made a clear distinction between individuals who were free and those who were not. In Xinjiang, despite the fact that the trade in human-beings had been banned by the Qianlong emperor, it continued throughout the nineteenth century, not least because it was intimately tied to the bek system. Traditionally, the hereditary beks had used serfs to work their lands and when the beks were then incorporated under the Qing administrative system they were given serfs (Tur. *inchü*, Ch. *yanqi*) and land as part of their emolument.[15] The vast majority, though not all, of the human booty brought into Xinjiang was captured from among the Mountain Tajiks. The Mountain Tajiks were Shiite Muslims and spoke an Indo-European language related to Persian, thus perhaps not surprisingly, they were considered as outsiders among the Turkic speaking Sunni Muslim populations. However, as the history of Central Asia repeatedly evidences, while the fate of most serfs was undoubtedly wretched, social mobility was not impossible. Ziyā' al-Dīn was an Ishāqī akhund who lived in Astin Atush to the northwest of Qäshqär and was a respected member of the local community. In 1815, he took an Āfāqī wife, who lived at the tomb complex of Āfāq Khoja (d.1694).[16] Having repeatedly failed to gain permission to move his new wife to his home in Atush, Ziyā' al-Dīn became angry and, according to Qing sources, set fire to a horse-ranch before marching towards Qäshqär. In the revolt that followed, hundreds lost their lives and many more fled for fear of recrimination; the suppression was swift and decisive. Songyun, a high-ranking Qing official with considerable experience of frontier affairs, was now sent to Altä Shähär to investigate the causes of the rising. Within days of arriving in the area he reported that Ziyā' al-Dīn's grandfather had been a Ghalcha from Badakhshan. While it must be acknowledged that Songyun seized on this as a reason not to punish all the 'good Muslims' (Ch. *liang Hui*), it is equally clear that local people offered this 'explanation' in order to

14 Kim Hodong (2004: 90), citing Muhammad A'lam in his *Tadhkira-i Hājjī Pādishāh*.

15 The highest third ranking bek for example would be given 200 *batmān* of arable land (approx. 353.5 hectares) and 100 *inchü* (serfs).

16 The two Naqshbandī sufi orders, the Āfāqiyya and the Ishāqiyya, had been contending for religious and political authority in the region since the seventeenth century.

distance themselves from the rising: Ziyā' al-Dīn may have been a pillar of the local community, but he was still the grandson of a Ghalcha.[17]

Finally, let us look at an autochthonous group who shared many of the defining characteristics of the 'Uyghurs', but from whom they universally distanced themselves. Since at least the seventeenth century a people known as the Dolans had dwelt along the Yäkän River. Like the oasis dwellers they were Sunni Muslims, they spoke the same Turkic language and similarly relied primarily on agriculture and cattle herding for their livelihood.[18] Significantly, Qing sources do not categorize them as a separate 'tribe' (Ch. *bu*), but official reports regularly differentiated them from other Turkic Muslims and they were administered on a day to day basis by beks appointed from within their own community. Clearly, in singling them out as a separate group who, unlike the other Turkic Muslims of Altä Shähär, were not defined by geographical location, the Qing authorities were responding to a pre-existing boundary, a pre-existing perception of difference. Several sources remark that the physiognomy of the Dolans differed slightly from that of the oasis dwellers (the result of localized inter-marriage?) and it is suggested that they may have been of Mongol, or possibly Kazakh or Kyrgyz, origin. We also know that they were fish-eaters and had their own music and dance, related to, but distinct from, that of any of the peoples of the oasis cities; similarly, some elements of their vocabulary were exclusive to the Dolan communities. Yet, all in all these differences do not amount to much more than those delineating the oasis dwellers of, for example, Khotän from those of Qäshqär. Nevertheless, the sources indicate that for at least 250 years, if not considerably more, a clear boundary existed between the Dolans and their Turkic Muslim neighbours.

The Dolans, like many 'Uyghurs', were followers of the Āfāqiyya and in the khoja risings of the nineteenth century, they were among the first to rebel against Qing rule. Their fierce support of the Āfāqī khojas is often attributed to the fact that they had served as their bondsmen, but following the Qing conquest they were conscripted in large numbers to serve as labourers at the Qing military post-stations (Ch. *juntai*).[19] Attached to every military station were ten or more households of Muslim labourers, frequently Dolans, who cultivated the adjacent land in order to supply provisions for the billeted troops. They received no salary from the Qing authorities and in many cases lived in abject poverty. Not surprisingly, therefore, in times of unrest they were quick to rebel, and for this they paid a high price. The Qing troops took harsh reprisals among the Dolan community and many took refuge in the neighbouring khanate of Khoqand (Newby, 2005: 154, 162).

Not only do the various sources attest that the Dolans, who lived in holes in the earth or huts of mud and reeds, were an economically inferior group to the 'Uyghurs' (Le Coq, 1928: 37–8), it is also clear that they were deemed culturally and socially inferior. Skrine (1926: 123–4), for example, who visited the region in the early

17 *Songyun Xinjiang zougao*, 6a-b (Songyun, repr. 1980).

18 Svanberg (1996: 270) suggests that the Dolans were semi-nomadic, but I have found no indication of this in eighteenth and nineteenth century Qing sources.

19 These post-stations which were dotted across Xinjiang formed the arteries of the Qing communication system.

twentieth century stated that: 'The standard of living as well as the standard of morals among the Dulanis [Dolans] is notably lower than among the Turkis.' In Soviet literature the Dolans are referred to as an 'ethnological group', while Svanberg (1996: 269) prefers the term 'sub-ethnic' category. I personally suspect that it may be more appropriate to regard the Dolans as an underclass of the 'Uyghurs', a group deemed to be socially and economically inferior (cf. Hoppe, 1998: 71–6). But whether insiders or outsiders in terms of ethnicity, what is important here is that there was a common perception among the dominant Turkic Muslim population (as among the Dolans themselves) that they were different. Significantly, it is a common feature of many ethnic groups that within their own community there is a shared sense of not only who is an outsider, but of the social stratifications within their own community.

'Us'

Above I have attempted to illustrate that the Turkic Muslims of Altä Shähär were bound by a clear sense of who they were not. In the following section, I shall briefly discuss those elements of shared geography, historical experience and culture that defined who they were, before focusing on the social interaction, specifically the movement of peoples between cities, that I would suggest was a prime factor in the creation of a sense of 'Us' extending far beyond the oasis city.

A glance at any map of Central Asia or northwest China reveals that the region south of the Tianshan Range where the Turkic Muslim population of Xinjiang was concentrated at the time of the Qing conquest was a clearly defined geographical region,[20] comprising a north-eastern zone at the head of the Gobi Desert, known as Uyghuristan, and the larger south-western zone of Altä Shähär, centred on the Tarim Basin. To the west Altä Shähär was bordered by the Pamirs, to the north by the Tianshan, to the south by the Kunlun Mountains. The geographical rationale of the region therefore dictated that historically contact between the cities of Altä Shähär (and between these cities and those of Uyghuristan) would have surpassed that with adjacent areas to the north, south or west.

The importance of the common historical experience in the formation of group identity has already been mentioned (e.g. the increasing animosity towards Khoqandi rule) and further examples will follow. Suffice to say here that although throughout the last 600-odd years the cities of Xinjiang have been subject to a variety of centrifugal political forces, for the most part, the people of Altä Shähär (and Uyghuristan) have shared a common destiny. The Timurid Empire which had brought unity to much of Central Asia collapsed in the first decade of the sixteenth century and by the mid-1500s raids by Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Turkmens had made Qäshqär and Yäkän politically unstable. 'Abdu-r-Rashīd Khān (r.1533-59) who had his court at Yäkän was the last of the Chaghataid rulers to have complete control over Altä Shähär. After his death, his successor 'Abd al-Karīm (r.1565-92) ruled in name only; power was fragmented among the *de facto* rulers of single oasis states, leading ultimately to the

20 Fletcher estimated that 70 per cent of 'Uyghurs' lived in the western area of the Tarim Basin and 10 per cent in Uyghuristan (1978: 69).

collapse of the Chaghatay khanate. By the early seventeenth century two branches of the Makhdūmzāda khojas had overshadowed the Chaghatay khans as wielders of power. Relations between the two lineages were strained. With the Āfāqiyya based in Qäshqär and Ishāqiyya in Yäkän, the region remained divided but, nevertheless, the historical experience of the various cities at this time was not dissimilar. Only with the advent of the Zunghar conquest in 1648 was Altä Shähär brought under the common ruler of Āfāq Khōja, while the Zunghars remained largely absentee overlords. Despite the frequent changes of ruler that followed Āfāq Khōja's brief reign and a series of bloody clashes between the khoja factions, duly aggravated by the machinations of Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, the region remained united. Thus, when the Qing finally routed the Zunghars from the Ili region in 1758 before marching south to suppress the rebellion led by the two Āfāqī khoja brothers, Burhān al-Dīn and Khōja-Jahān, Altä Shähär had already enjoyed nearly 100 years of unified, if unsettled, rule.

Just as important, however, as the shared historical experience are the shared myths and legends that emerge from those experiences and are specific to the people of this region. These stories form the psychological bedrock of that all too complex phenomenon 'culture'. Just as the Turkic languages of Central Asia have their local and regional variations, influenced by geography and historical experience, so imagined historical traditions: myths, song, dance, cuisine and life cycle rituals all have their regional forms. To the best of my knowledge, with the exception of Ildikó Bellér-Hann's work (forthcoming), there exists no comprehensive study that attempts to document the culture of East Turkestan in the eighteenth/nineteenth century, still less to compare and contrast it with that of other parts of Turkic Central Asia. Nevertheless, scattered evidence suggests that such a comparison would conclude that not only was there a common culture in East Turkestan at this time, but that it possessed significant features that distinguished it from other neighbouring Turkic Muslim cultures. Indeed, Western travellers of the nineteenth century frequently remarked on the distinct culture and sociological features of the region. Many of these may be associated with the historical experience of Qing rule, for example the relaxed approach to Islam under the Qing, and myths relating to the khoja Jahāngīr. However, other traditions pre-date the Qing and many are associated with pre-Islamic local practices.[21]

Much has been made of the isolation of the oasis cities of eighteenth/nineteenth century Xinjiang, the long distances and difficulty of inter-oasis travel. This is clearly true from our Western twentieth/twenty-first century perspective; however, the extraordinary feats of endurance that people did, and of course still do, regularly undertake in many parts of the world, in order to engage in trade or to carry out administrative duties suggests that journeying between the cities of Altä Shähär would not have been considered particularly arduous or indeed unusual. Thus, a mere five days between Qäshqär and Yäkän, for example, was relatively easy compared with the journey from Qäshqär to Andijan in neighbouring Khoqand, a trek of some 15 days across mountains that were perilous in winter. Trade was one of the main

21 For example, the regional version of veneration for the Twelve Leaders of Muhammad's family (Grenard, 1898: Vol. 3, 3–4).

motives for travel between localities and, perhaps contrary to general belief, there was sufficient variety in the produce of the oasis cities to stimulate an active trade. While in general terms the cities of the Tarim Basin shared a common climatic and ecological environment, and one that differed only moderately from that of the more northerly Uyghuristan, local variations in climate and soil ensured that the cities were traditionally identified with different agricultural produce and specialities. For example, Qäshqär produced pomegranates, papaya, apples and grapes, while Yäkän was said to produce the best rice, grain and squash of the region. Qumul and Turpan were, of course, renowned for their melons and grapes, while Aqsu produced a wide range of fruits as well as grains. Bay, however, produced little grain or fruit and in Sarim apparently, no fruit grew at all (Hua Li, 1998: 20–1 citing Qishiyi). Qäshqär, Aqsu and Yäkän were important cotton producers, while Khotän was famous for its mulberry trees. Not only were many of the oasis cities known for their particular agricultural produce, several also boasted specific mineral deposits and/or expertise in manufacturing a variety of products: carpets, silk, knives, etc. Despite the lack of detailed documentation, there can be little doubt that inter-oasis trade among the cities of Altä Shähär was well-established before the Qing conquest, and extended to Uyghuristan and even north of the Tianshan. Undoubtedly, there were periods of lengthy interruption such as during the decline of the Chaghatay khanate in the late sixteenth century, the local conflicts of the seventeenth century, the Qing conquest in the eighteenth century and the khoja risings in the nineteenth century. It is also likely that under the Qing many of the local traders were displaced by the mercantile aggression of the Han and Sino-Muslim traders, as well as the increasingly influential Khoqandi merchants. However, numerous references in Qing documents (often in legal cases) to merchants from one city of Xinjiang who were sojourning in another indicate that local merchants continued to play a significant role in inter-oasis trade.

Nor was inter-oasis contact limited to men. According to Qing records inter-oasis marriage was a well-established practice. As mentioned above, the Turkic Muslims of Xinjiang practised virilocality and Qing sources (once again frequently legal cases) regularly refer to married women who were living in cities other than those of their birthplace. Moreover, not only did these women retain links with their families, sometimes thousands of *li* away, but invariably widows or divorced women would return to their paternal home. Such was the case of 'Aysha, the daughter of the hakim bek of Shayar. In the wake of the Ziyā' al-Din revolt in 1815, her father reported to the Qing authorities that she was the widow of Ziyā' al-Dīn's eldest son. In her deposition, while claiming the she had no knowledge of her former father-in-law's intention to revolt, 'Aysha admits that despite now living hundreds of *li* away from her deceased husband's home in the village of Tashmaliq, outside Qäshqär, she still received occasional communications from there.[22] Significantly, unlike those who came from outside the region, women were not considered outsiders just because they came from a different city in Xinjiang.

Another motivation for individuals, men and women, to move between the oasis cities was pilgrimage. As in other parts of Central Asia, saint worship at the

22 *Zhupi zouzhe, Minzu lei* (First Historical Archives, Beijing) 625.1, JQ20.9.4.

mazars was widespread in East Turkestan. Thus, for example, the shrine of the Āfāqī khojas outside Qäshqär would have drawn supporters of the khojas not just from the immediate vicinity, but from all over East Turkestan, while similarly the *mazar* of Satūq Bughrā Khān at Atush served as a focal point for Ishāqī followers (as well as Āfāqī). Other shrines were associated with particular ailments or problems such as infertility and drew men, but also large numbers of women, from vast distances to worship.[23]

In addition to traditional reasons for inter-oasis contacts, the Qing conquest introduced other factors that necessitated and promoted movement both between the oasis cities, and north and south of the Tianshan. Perhaps the best documented of these is the bek system. While beks had also served as local officials before the conquest, under the Qing the hereditary nature of these appointments was abolished and as a further step to eradicate the development of local power bases, the principle of avoidance was introduced. Initially this went some way towards breaking down old power bases and eradicating abuses of power, but the Qing authorities were still reliant on a relatively small number of educated, and thus affluent, families to supply them with beks, and by the late eighteenth century many of the old elite families had, therefore, already re-established their influence – this time sanctioned by the Qing. Prior to the conquest it was not unknown for members of the same family to serve as beks in different cities, for example, Hoshik a native of Khotän had served as hakim bek in Qäshqär while his uncle was the *shang* bek (collector of revenues) in Yäkän.[24] However, the concern of the Qing authorities to prevent sons from assuming posts in the same cities as their fathers accentuated this tendency and in many instances had the effect of extending the geographical scope of the family's power base even further. Let us take just one example: the family of Emīn Khōja of Turpan. As is well known, the Qing army that advanced into Altä Shähär was accompanied by Turkic Muslims from Uyghuristan who not only served in their ranks but acted as guides and advisers. Subsequently, these families enjoyed particular favour from the Qing court. Emīn Khōja of Turpan who had established his pro-Qing credentials during the Zunghar wars was one such man. After the conquest he was appointed hakim bek in Ili and then in Yäkän; he was conferred with the insignia of the 3-eyed peacock feather and raised to the second rank of imperial nobility *junwang*, a title which, in the course of the next 150-odd years, was passed down through six generations to nine of his descendants. Contrary to the rule of avoidance, Emīn's eldest son Mūsā succeeded him as hakim bek in Ili and then became hakim bek in Qäshqär, where he was assisted by his younger brother Iskandar (Emīn Khōja's sixth son) in the office of *ishikāghā* bek (assistant to the hakim bek). Subsequently both Iskandar and his son Yūnus served as hakim bek of Qäshqär, while Afridūn, the son of Yūnus, held the office of hakim bek in Yäkän. Meanwhile, in Ili, Mūsā was succeeded as

23 On the role of women in shrine culture, see Foltz (1999: 18).

24 Hoshik who subsequently surrendered to the Qing owned properties in several cities of Altä Shähär, including Khotän, Qaraqash and Yäkän. For Hoshik's biography see *Qinding waifan Menggu Huibu wanggong biaozhuan, juan* 117, no. 101 (Qinding waifan 1779).

hakim bek by his sons E-luo-mu-za-bu and then Mi-li-ke-za-bu.[25] Clearly, therefore, in the space of three or four generations, courtesy of the Qing, the power of one elite Turpani family with extensive economic interests extended deep into Altä Shähär as well as north of the Tianshan. While their political loyalties may have lain with the Qing for purposes of expediency, it seems unlikely that families such as that of Emīn Khōja did not view the Turkic Muslims of Xinjiang as 'their people' wherever they dwelt.

Another effect of Qing rule that ensured widespread interaction between the Turkic Muslims from different oasis cities was migration. There were three main 'types' of migration, all of which may be directly linked to Qing policies: 1) repopulation after revolts 2) agricultural migration and 3) penal migration. Perhaps the best example of large scale repopulation followed the rising in Uch Turpan of 1765. During the course of the hostilities several thousands of people in and around the city lost their lives. Finally, following a harrowing siege of several weeks, the Qing forces broke through the ramparts and massacred all the surviving inhabitants of the city.[26] In the aftermath of this tragedy, according to Qishiyi (1777: 26a), Green Standard troops then set about opening wasteland on the outskirts of the city and 500 households were moved from Aqsu, Yäkän, Khotän and Qäshqär to cultivate the land around the city. The process of repopulating the city and its environs continued and by the early nineteenth century there were reportedly 856 households, totalling 5,083 people, in the Uch Turpan area.[27] How, one wonders, did these people from all over southern Xinjiang think of themselves? With time, perhaps, as Uch Turpanliqs, but surely also as part of a much wider 'Uyghur' community?

Migration for purposes of agricultural development is somewhat better documented. The large scale movement of Turkic Muslims from the south to the north was initiated not by the Qing but by their Mongol predecessors, the Zunghars. During the rule of Batur Hun Taiji in the mid-seventeenth century the Zunghars had already begun moving large numbers of sedentary agriculturists from the south in order to open up the arable lands of the Ili region and provide food for the Zunghar stronghold. Some of these people were prisoners of war, while others were simply forcibly moved from the cities of Altä Shähär.[28] Thus, on the eve of the Qing conquest, Saguchi Tōru (cited in Hua Li, 1998: 19–24) has estimated that there were already 4–5 thousand households of Altä Shähäri Turkic Muslims living in northern Xinjiang.

25 See Newby (1998: 286–87) and Wang Xilong (1992: 37). On the bek system generally, see Miao Pusheng (1995). The hyphenated names are transcribed from Chinese transliterations.

26 Figures for the population of Uch Turpan immediately before the rising are difficult to ascertain. Qishiyi suggests that there was 'originally a population of several tens of thousands' (24a), while an untitled Qing work of 1762–63, published as *Xiyu dili tushuo zhu* (Ruan, 1992) gives the figures of 472 households, 1,555 people, in the city itself, and a total of 2,900-odd households, 12,100 people, in the city and surrounding villages. The editor of this work suggests that Qishiyi's figure may pre-date Zunghar rule (Ruan, 1992: 18–19, 22).

27 Ruan (1992: 22) citing the *Yitong zhi* (Jiaqing).

28 Hua Li cites the example of a man from Uch Turpan who escaped to the interior of China in 1733 and claimed to have been moved to the Ili area along with over 100 households 13 years earlier (1998: 23).

After the decimation of the Zunghars, the Qing adopted a similar policy in order to repopulate the north; large numbers of Altä Shähäri agriculturists were moved not only to Ili but also to Turpan and Qumul. In 1760, 300 'Uyghur' households were moved to Ili from Aqsu, Uch Turpan, Qarashahr and Kucha. Eight years later there were 6,383 households of 'Uyghur' agriculturists in the area.[29] As Xilong (1992: 33) has pointed out not all of these would have been forced to migrate by the Qing authorities. Some were returnees who had been settled in the north during the rule of the Zunghars but had fled at the time of the Qing conquest, and others were 'volunteers' attracted by the government offer of seeds, tools and fertile land, or fleeing poverty and the extortions of corrupt officials in other cities. Thus, these people who came to be known as Taranchis (and were officially recognized as a separate ethnic group in the 1930s) emanated from all over Altä Shähär. They arrived in the north at different times and had differing relationships with the Qing state, but there is no indication in Qing texts that communities developed according to local origin. On the contrary, in an alien environment where Qing presence was much stronger than in the south, any local differences are likely to have been quickly repressed.

Such certainly seems to have been the case for those who were sent to the north to serve as bondsmen for the garrison troops or local officials. These included those who were guilty of criminal offences as well as the families of rebels (the rebels themselves having invariably been sentenced to death). What information there is on these people may largely be gleaned from legal cases which frequently resulted when, pushed to the edge by abuse and exploitation, the bondsmen took vengeance on their Manchu or Chinese masters. Significantly, case after case reveals examples of Turkic Muslims originating from various cities of Xinjiang who were drawn together in crime by their common plight.[30]

Conclusion

On reflection, I may well be guilty of having taken a sledgehammer to crack a nut, but in so doing I hope to have put paid to any suggestion that in the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries the sedentary Turkic Muslims of Xinjiang/East Turkestan had no sense of trans-oasis identity or indeed that their identity was any more fluid or negotiable than that of the average Welshman or Scot. Putting aside the issue of how we define ourselves to foreigners encountered on our home territory, the question must be asked how else were the oasis-dwellers of East Turkestan/Xinjiang to define themselves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Undoubtedly, the boundary between the 'Uyghur' and his Chinese neighbour to the east was greater than that which divided him from his fellow Turkic Muslim to the west, but the very fact that these boundaries did exist and were fiercely defended is to a large extent responsible for the fact that the Uyghurs of the twenty-first century are, indeed, situated between Central Asia and China – with all the intrinsic problems that entails.

29 *Xichui zongtong shilüe, juan* 7 (Songyun et al., 1808).

30 Examples of such cases can be found among the *Zhupi zouzhe* and *lufu* (*Minzu* lei) in the First Historical Archives (Beijing).

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Chapter 2

The Uyghurs as a Part of Central Asian Commonality: Soviet Historiography on the Uyghurs

Ablet Kamalov

Introduction

The question of situating the Uyghurs between China and Central Asia has many aspects. First of all, it presupposes a dilemma between China and Central Asia. It seems to me that this formulation of the question is potentially ambiguous, since these terms imply different categories of meaning. The term 'China' implies a political category relating to the nation-state, even if a multi-ethnic one. On the other hand, 'Central Asia' is a geographical notion defining a certain region within the Asian continent. Difference in the level of these categories is similar to the difference between Siberia and Russia, or between the Volga region (Povoljzh'e) and Russia. Yet such a dilemma exists because of the contradiction between the non-Chinese Central Asian origin of the Uyghurs and the current incorporation of their homeland into the Chinese nation-state.

The question of situating the Uyghurs derives firstly from the growing global interest in this people due to changes in the geopolitical situation in Asia following the Soviet demise. Secondly, it comes from the new meaning that the term 'Central Asia' has acquired over the last decade. This term came into active use during the nineteenth century as a result of the Russian expansion in this part of the world and the political rivalry between the Russian and the British Empires for dominance in the region. The notion of 'Central Asia' determined the region as a 'centre', 'middle part', or 'heart' of Asia, implying its geographical location in the centre of the continent. Since that time there have been two traditions in the use of this term – the English and the Russian tradition – which have subsequently been accepted by other local traditions.

From the outset, the Russian terminology differed from that accepted in English. The Russian differentiated between 'Middle Asia' (Srednyaya Aziya) and 'Central Asia' (Tsentralnaya Aziya). 'Middle Asia' covered the territory of the Bukhara and Khokand Khanates, conquered by the Russians in the 1860s, and corresponding to the territories of today's Central Asian Republics minus Kazakhstan. It is generally accepted that the Kazakh steppes were incorporated into the Russian Empire much earlier. This tradition persisted in Soviet terminology in the social science and the humanities: in the Soviet Union, it was common to use the combination of terms

'Srednyaya Aziya i Kazakhstan' (Middle Asia and Kazakhstan). It is interesting that Kazakhstan was included neither in the term 'Middle Asia' nor in the notion of Central Asia. Though the term 'Central Asia' was less specific compared with 'Middle Asia', in both its meanings (narrow and wide) today's Xinjiang was understood to be its core part.

In English and other western languages, the earlier notion of 'Central Asia' included both parts of Turkestan, that is the lands of the Turks, and some adjacent territories, including Afghan Turkestan. If we look at how British explorers, travellers and diplomats referred to the land inhabited by the Uyghurs, we find that there was no common name for this region and the authors called it, variously, 'Chinese Turkestan', 'East Turkestan', 'Chinese Central Asia', 'Sinkiang'. Very often these terms were used interchangeably.

The notion of 'Central Asia' underwent radical change after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the founding of new independent states in 1991. This change occurred in both the Soviet and western traditions. When the independent states came into being in former Soviet Central Asia, there emerged a need for a specific and concrete regional term referring to the ethnic, cultural and religious affinities of the new nations. The best form for this was 'Central Asia', even in the Russian and local terminology. This notion was accepted by local Central Asian peoples with readiness, since the term 'Middle Asia' both had colonial overtones and failed to include the largest country of this region – Kazakhstan. For this reason, the term quickly became widespread, and consequently acquired a political meaning. However, in academic writings, it did not lose its wider implication. So, what we have now, at least in Russian and local terminology, is the merging of this new narrow meaning with the traditional broader meaning of the term.

Central Asia and Uyghur Nationalism

Studies on nationalism have shown that nations are constructed commonalities, or, to use Benedict Anderson's words, 'imagined communities' (1983). The construction of modern Uyghur ethnic identity was initiated in Russian Central Asia. The Uyghurs were recognized for the first time as a nation by the Soviet state during the period of national delimitation and demarcation in Central Asia in the early 1920s. It was at this time that the territories of the modern Central Asian republics were set up by the Soviet authorities (Wheeler, 1964), and that the name 'Uyghur' was chosen and accepted by the Bolshevik government as a common name for the sedentary Turkic population originating from Chinese Turkestan. Many scholars believe that this name was accepted as an ethnonym through the resolution of the Conference held in Tashkent in 1921. Though this is a simplification of the complex nation-building process of that time, acceptance of this name for the sedentary Turkic population of Chinese Turkestan illustrates the role played by Soviet Central Asia in the development of Uyghur national identity and Uyghur nationalism.

E.J. Hobsbawm distinguishes three phases in the history of a national movement: a) a purely cultural, literary and folkloric phase without particular political or even national implications; b) the phase when a body of pioneers and militants of

'the national idea' begins political campaigning for this idea; c) the phase when nationalist programmes acquire mass support, or at least some of the mass support that nationalists always claim they have (1992: 12). If we apply this concept of three main phases of a national movement – which is largely based on European history – to Uyghur history, we can see that the earliest phases of the Uyghur national movement originated in the Russian Empire and then in the Soviet Union.

The growth of Uyghur nationalism in Chinese and Soviet Central Asia occurred, on the one hand, as part of a general process of nation-building and shaping of national consciousness in Central Asia, and on the other hand, as a response to growing Chinese nationalism. In the clash between Chinese and Uyghur nationalisms, a significant part was played by the history writing process. A shared history is one of the key elements cementing a sense of belonging to a common nation since, as Paul Gilbert indicates, the main role of history is 'to individuate nations' (1998: 154).

The contest between the Chinese and Uyghur versions of Uyghur history was well demonstrated recently by Bovingdon and Tursun (2004) in their chapter in the volume *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*. The Chinese claim that Xinjiang has been an integral and inalienable part of China since ancient times, that Uyghurs form part of the Chinese nation (Ch. *Zhonghua minzu*) and that they have never established their own independent states. Uyghur historians, on the contrary, believe that the Uyghurs have never belonged to the Chinese nation, and that their ancestors created in the past a brilliant civilization and established numerous independent states. The core point in this discussion is the question of whether the Uyghurs are a Central Asian people belonging to the Turkic 'nation' (the Uyghur version) or one of the minority nationalities (Ch. *shaoshu minzu*) composing the united Chinese nation, as the Chinese believe.

Soviet Historiography on the Uyghurs

A Uyghur nationalist historical narrative began to appear in Xinjiang in the 1940s. The first attempt to describe Uyghur history from a Uyghur point of view was made in the book *Shärqi Türkistan tarikhi* [History of East Turkestan] by Muhammad Imin Bughra, completed in 1940 during his exile in Afghanistan (Bughra, 1940). With the exception of Polat Qadiri's *Ölka tarikhi* [History of a Province] published in Ürümchi in 1948, there was never an opportunity for Uyghur historians within the region itself to formulate their own vision of Uyghur history. The 1980s brought a period of relative freedom in China including the introduction of conciliatory minority policies, which resulted in the publishing of Turghun Almas' book *Uyghurlar* [The Uyghurs] (1989), the only publication presenting an alternative version of Uyghur history to the official one. The vision of Uyghur history formulated in that book and, covertly, in other academic and popular writings actually originated from Soviet historiography.

The initiative in the study of the history and culture of the medieval Turks and Uyghurs of Inner Asia belonged to the Russian scholars. The Russians researched not only medieval Uyghur history, but also the recent past of today's Xinjiang. It was Russian scholarship, for instance, that introduced for the first time the terms 'West

Turkestan' and 'East Turkestan'. In 1829, the Russian sinologist N. Bichurin stated: 'it would be better here to call Bukhara's Turkestan the Western one, and Chinese Turkestan the Eastern [...] The name "Chinese Turkestan" should be changed.' (1829, 12). Nevertheless, the name 'East Turkestan' acquired a wide usage in academic literature only in the second half of the twentieth century.

The history of the Uyghurs and of the region became especially important in the Soviet scholarship of the 1940s, in connection with the establishment of the pro-Soviet East Turkestan Republic (ETR) between 1944 and 1949 in the region's three westernmost prefectures (Ili, Tarbaghatay and Altay), neighbouring Soviet Kazakhstan. The growth of local separatism and the possibility of secession from China proper pushed the Guomindang leaders to appeal to history in an attempt to justify Chinese sovereignty over this land. When Guomindang leaders questioned the claims of the Uyghurs about their indigeneity to Xinjiang, they thus referred to historical accounts. For example, Zhang Zhizhong, chair of the coalition government set up in 1947, devoted one of his public speeches to the ancient history of Xinjiang, where he claimed that Xinjiang was the homeland not only of the Uyghurs but also of the Chinese, who had settled there even earlier than the Uyghurs, during the Han dynasty (third century BC – third century AD). Such appeals to history in turn stimulated the Soviet government into helping the ETR leaders conduct these historical discussions. The growth of interest in history during the period of the ETR was also reflected in the production of special historical reports prepared by the British Consul in Qäshqär, Michael Gillet, and the American Consul in Ürümchi, Robert Ward (cf. Ward, 1945).

However, the main contribution to the study of the Uyghurs and their culture in the 1940s was made by two well-known Soviet turcologists, S.E. Malov and A.N. Bernshtam. S.E. Malov, who is considered to be one of the founding fathers of Soviet Uyghur studies, was the author of a number of works on the Uyghur language and dialects. He played an instrumental role in the working out of the norms of the Uyghur literary language in the 1920s. During the Second World War he was evacuated to Almaty,[1] the capital of Kazakhstan, and while he lived there he maintained close relations with local Uyghur intellectuals. As a result of the political situation in Xinjiang at that time, he paid special attention to the Uyghurs in his work on ancient Turkic written monuments and manuscripts and Turkic languages (Malov, 1951). In this book, Malov focused on the Uyghurs' role in Central Asia, describing them as the most ancient Turkic people, who had made a significant contribution to world history.

However, the most important works on Uyghur history and the Uyghur homeland were written by the Soviet turcologist and archaeologist A.N. Bernshtam. In 1947, at the peak of the ETR, the journal *Vestnik Drevnei istorii* [Herald of Ancient History] published an article by him entitled 'Problemy istorii Vostochnogo Turkestana' [Problems of the History of East Turkestan] (1947a), in which he substantiated the important relationship between the region and Central Asia, as well as the close relationship between the Uyghurs and other Central Asian peoples. He concluded

1 The name of the city was changed from 'Alma-Ata' to the Kazakh spelling, 'Almaty', in 1991 following independence. 'Almaty' will be used throughout for the sake of consistency.

that the study of the region's history was 'in the first place the task of Soviet Oriental Studies' (1947a: 71). Aside from noting the historical links between the Uyghurs and Soviet Central Asian peoples, he also argued that the Uyghurs were indigenous to the territory of what is today Xinjiang. This conclusion constituted a direct response to the political assertions made by the Chinese government.

The early stages of Uyghur history were the topic of another book written by A.N. Bernshtam, *Uyghur hälqining qädimiy wä ottura äsir tarikhi qissiliri* [Essays on the Ancient and Medieval History of the Uyghurs] (1951).[2] This was an extensive work covering the history of the Uyghurs and their ancestors starting from the fourth century BC and continuing until the Mongol period. Though the book was compiled during the ETR period, it was published only after the Communist takeover. It is quite interesting that the book was written in Uyghur in the Arabic script, meaning that it was produced for consumption in Xinjiang, where the Arabic script was still in use. However, the new Communist authorities did not like the content of the book, which they considered extremist nationalist writing, and refused to disseminate it in Xinjiang. Yet though it failed to reach the mass Uyghur readership in Xinjiang and its circulation in the USSR was prohibited in order not to irritate the 'great friends' (the PRC leaders), it nevertheless became a main academic source for future Uyghur nationalist histories. This writing inspired Uyghur historians and intellectuals in the Soviet Union and even in Xinjiang, where some intellectuals were able to get a copy of the book, stimulating the creation of other nationalist versions of Uyghur history through the elaboration of the ideas expressed in it. For example, Bernshtam believed that since ancient times there were at least two branches of the Uyghurs in Asia: the sedentary Uyghur population of East Turkestan and the nomadic Uyghurs of Inner Asia, who also originated from the ancient Uyghur population of East Turkestan.

It is worth noting that Bernshtam claimed that the Uyghurs were indigenous not only to East Turkestan, but also to the Semirech'ye region (in today's South-East Kazakhstan). In describing the history of the Tiele tribes – who he claims were ancestors of the nomadic Uyghurs of the eighth-ninth centuries – A.N. Bernshtam emphasized that present day Semirech'ye, as well as other parts of Central Asia, was once populated by the Tiele tribes. This was a historical fact narrated in all medieval Chinese sources, including the standard histories of the Tang Dynasty *Jiu Tang shu* [Old Tang Records] and *Xin Tang shu* [New Tang Records].[3] The migrations of nomadic Uyghurs in the ninth century were thus seen as leading to the merging of three branches of the same ethnic group, that is, the Uyghurs. He wrote:

> Thus, the most ancient period in the history of the Uyghur people occurred in three places. We will try to study their history in those places. First of all it should be said that the East Turkestanian branch of the Uyghurs consisted mainly of sedentary people; it grew gradually maintaining relations with the western and Central Asian branches of the Uyghurs (Bernshtam, 1951: 36).

2 Bernshtam's book was published in Uyghur (Arabic script). We do not have its Russian version, though the original text must be in Russian and may be kept in the Archive.

3 On Tang sources on T'iele tribes see Chen, 1955: 683–723.

The links between the Uyghurs and the region of Semirech'ye were illustrated by A.N. Bernshtam in the article 'Uigurskaya epigrafika Semirech'ya' [Uyghur Epigraphs of Semirech'ye] (1947b and 1948). The emphasis on Uyghur traces in this region – now belonging to Soviet Kazakhstan – can be better understood if we recall that during the ETR period (1944–49) the Kazakhstan Communist Party leaders discussed the possibility of establishing a Uyghur autonomous area on the frontier, where the Uyghurs comprised the majority of the population.[4]

However, with the Communist takeover in China in 1949, the situation in Xinjiang and Soviet Central Asia changed dramatically. The need to substantiate the indigeneity of the Uyghurs to East Turkestan and to establish Uyghur autonomy in Semirech'ye faded. Moreover, the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 affected academic studies on the Uyghurs in Soviet Central Asia, pushing the Soviet authorities to set up a special research group (sector) in Uyghur-Dungan Studies at the Academy of Sciences in Almaty, the capital of Kazakhstan.[5] Indeed, the development of Uyghur Studies in Kazakhstan, as well as of other Uyghur cultural institutions, can be seen as a mirror reflection of Soviet/Kazakhstan-Chinese relations. For example, the tension in bilateral relations in the early 1960s, which in May 1962 led to the exodus of many Uyghurs, Kazakhs and Dungans from the Ghulja region in Xinjiang to Kazakhstan and to the closure of the Soviet Consulates in Xinjiang, resulted in the further development of Uyghur studies, which were then separated from Dungan Studies. The latter were transferred to the Academy of Sciences. The expanded Uyghur studies group based in Almaty later became the basis upon which a special Institute for Uyghur Studies was set up at the Academy of Science in 1986. The Institute was established as a result of the improvement in Sino-Soviet relations in the late Soviet period. Similarly, its closure in 1996 was a consequence of the establishment of the Shanghai Five – later to become the Shanghai Six and then the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) – which strengthened the collaboration between Kazakhstan and China in a joint struggle against Uyghur separatism.

Almost all Soviet historical works on the Uyghurs published in the USSR after 1949 claimed the Central Asian and non-Chinese origin of the Uyghurs. Some of those published in the 1950s-60s were written or started during the ETR period, while others were published after the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations in the

4 Cf. the recently disclosed document from the Soviet archives named 'Memorandum on the Establishment of a Uyghur Autonomous Oblast' within KazSSR' dated February 1947. In the 'Memorandum', Zh. Shayakhmetov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Kazakhstan Communist Party, argued the necessity of establishing a Uyghur autonomous area which would cover the Panfilov and October districts of the Taldy-Kurghan oblast' and the Chilik, Enbekshi-Kazakh, Uyghur, Narynkol and Keghen districts of the Almaty oblast', with a centre in Panfilov (Zharkent). According to him, the creation of the Uyghur autonomous oblast' would, among other things, activate the Uyghur 'national-liberation movement, even better orienting it to the Soviet Union'. This document is now kept in the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (fund 708, opis' II, delo #171, 61–65). Its text as well as some others is reproduced in Khlyupin (1999: 227–8).

5 Dungans, (Turk. Tungan, Ch. Hui) are Chinese Muslims, communities of whom can be found in Central Asia, mostly in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Uyghur studies were amalgamated with Dungan Studies, since both were considered immigrants from China.

early 1960s, when Soviet historiography on the Uyghurs began to push the idea that the region called Xinjiang by the Chinese was in fact the homeland of the Uyghurs.

It should be noted that the institutionalization of Uyghur Studies in Kazakhstan had started with the establishment of a special division for Uyghur studies at the Academy of Sciences in 1949. While previous publications on the Uyghurs had been exclusively produced by Russian scholars based in the central cities of Moscow and Leningrad, now a Central Asian scholarship on the Uyghurs emerged. Hence, from 1949 onwards, we can distinguish two groups of academic publications on the Uyghurs: those produced by the central academic institutions of the USSR and those published in the Central Asian republics. The centrally produced publications were more careful in dealing with historical facts and offered thoroughly researched topics based on rigorous analysis of historical sources. They mostly focused on the same topics that were being examined by Western scholars. For example, Soviet scholars produced serious works on the history of the medieval Uyghurs, including both the nomadic tribes in Mongolia and the sedentary societies of the Turpan and Qarakhanid Khanates, and began to develop theories concerning the early states of those peoples. The general history of statehood in Central Asia became a very important theme in Soviet scholarship and, within this conceptual framework, the question of Uyghur statehood also drew scholars' attention. Suffice it to say that the history of the ancient Turks of the sixth-eighth centuries was thoroughly researched by Soviet scholars (Grumm-Grzhymailo, 1926; Klyashtorniy, 1964; Gumilev, 1967). In a similar way, the period of the Uyghur Empire in Inner Asia (eighth–ninth centuries) and the Uyghur Kingdom of Turpan (ninth-thirteenth centuries) were perceived as part of the ancient Turkic period (*drevnetyurkskii* period) in the history of Central Asia.

Those works influenced by the existence of the ETR included a dissertation by a Uyghur archaeologist from Kyrgyzstan, A. Kibirov, entitled *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskii stroy Uyghurstana in the XIII-XIV vv* [Social and Economic Structure of Uyghuristan in the thirteenth-fourteenth Centuries], which he defended in 1950. The usage of the name 'Uyghuristan' in 1950 is directly linked to the existence of the ETR (1944–49). Moreover, the emergence of this name cannot be considered accidental when we recall that after Xinjiang had been incorporated into the PRC in the early 1950s, Uyghur intellectuals in Xinjiang had advocated the establishment of a 'Uyghuristan Republic' within the PRC. Subsequently, adherents of this idea were repressed by the Chinese Communists (Khakimbayev, 1973: 96–7; Syroyejkin, 2003: 553).

Soviet works on the Ancient or Old Uyghurs were part of the discipline of turcological studies developed in Soviet Central Asia. However, Chinese leaders in Xinjiang believed that turcology was 'not a pure academic problem' but 'contain[ed] within it a political problem'. Turcology, in the opinion of the First Secretary of the Xinjiang Communist Party, Wang Enmao, was about the belonging of all Turkic peoples to the 'great tree of the Turki nation' (Wang Enmao, quoted in Bovingdon and Tursun, 2004: 361). In these terms, all Soviet turcological studies on the Uyghurs were heresy from the Chinese point of view. Not only did this aspect of Soviet academic research coincide with the Uyghur nationalist vision of Uyghur history and serve to foster Uyghur nationalism, but some aspects of the history of

the Turkic peoples were also directly connected with disputes between Uyghur and Chinese nationalists. These included, for example, a discourse on statehood. Soviet turcological studies presented a particular conceptualization of the early Turkic states, according to which the nomadic Uyghurs, as well as the Turks, had established their state (*el*) in Inner Asia (Mongolia, 744–840 AD) and then in East Turkestan in 850–1250 AD. The most prominent contribution to the study of the early Uyghur states was the book written by D.I. Tikhonov, *Khozyaistvo i obshchestvennyi stroi Uigurskogo gosudarstva X-XIV vv* [Economy and Social Structure of the Uyghur State in the tenth-fourteenth Centuries] (1966). This work was a continuation of the German turcological tradition, which had also recognized the existence of the Uyghur Kingdom. D. I. Tikhonov's work was preceded by the contribution of A. von Gabain, who published two volumes entitled *Das Uigurische Konigreich von Chotcsho. 850–1250* [The Uyghur Kingdom of Khocho. 850–1250] (1961) and *Das Leben im Uigurischen Konigreich von Qočo* (850–1250) [Life in the Uyghur Kingdom of Khocho] (1973). What is interesting here is the use of the terms 'state' [Russian, *gosudarstvo*] and 'kingdom' [German, *Konigreich*] in the titles of these books. These academic works implicitly recognized the existence of a Uyghur state in 850–1250, thus rejecting the Chinese nationalist view and indirectly shoring up Uyghur nationalism.

These aspects of Soviet turcological works on the Uyghurs were emphasized during the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, the trough of which came during the 1970s and the early 1980s. At that time, Uyghur Studies were mobilized by the Soviets to oppose and criticize Chinese nationality policy, as part of a more general ideological war against China. The general framework of the criticism was created by scholars from Moscow. Some of the works that appeared during that time openly criticized the oppressive policy of the Chinese government towards the Uyghurs and other minority nationalities. The most representative works of this type were those by Tursun Rakhimov, a Uyghur historian who worked for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). In 1968, he published the brochure *Natsionalism i shovinizm – osnova politiki gruppy Mao Ze-duna* [Nationalism and Chauvinism – The Basis for the Policy of Mao Zedong's Group], in which he stressed the Central Asian origin of the Uyghurs, saying: 'The Uyghurs are one of the most ancient Turkic peoples of Central Asia. For many centuries the Uyghur people's history was closely connected with that of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. In language, culture and art, Uyghurs are the closest people to Uzbeks' (Rakhimov, 1968: 119). He then went on to describe the Uyghurs' contribution to the Central Asian civilization.

All these arguments were further developed in another book by the same author titled *Sud'by nekhanskikh narodov KNR* [Fate of the Non-Han Peoples of the PRC] (Rakhimov, 1981) and in a publication by B. Gurevich, *Istoriya 'Iliiskogo voprosa' i yego kitaiskiye falsifikatsii* [History of the 'Ili Question' and its Chinese Falsifications] (1982). The latter openly accused the Chinese authorities of oppressing the minority nationalities and criticized the Chinese falsification of history. As far as Uyghur history is concerned, Rakhimov argued that: a) the motherland of the Uyghurs was East Turkestan; b) East Turkestan was conquered by China in the middle of the

eighteenth century and, together with Zungharia, was renamed 'Xinjiang';[6] c) the Uyghurs had established their own states in the past, including the Uyghur Empire (745–840), the Turpan Kingdom which lasted about 500 years (850–1250) and the Qarakhanid Khanate (870–1212). However, what Rakhimov emphasized most strongly was Uyghur resistance to Chinese rule. According to him, the Uyghur national liberation movement had successfully resulted in establishing a number of short-lived independent states: the Uyghur state of Yättä Shähär in Southern Xinjiang (the Qäshqär [Kashgar] Emirate) in 1864–77, the Turkic Islamic Republic of East Turkestan (TIRET) in 1932–33, and the East Turkestan Republic (ETR) in North-West Xinjiang in 1944–49 (Rakhimov, 1981: 29).[7] It is interesting to note that Rakhimov used in his work both terms, 'Xinjiang' and 'East Turkestan', depending on the historical period.

In criticizing the Maoist distortion of the history of the non-Han peoples, Rakhimov drew attention to Chinese claims that a) China had been a multi-ethnic state since ancient times, and therefore all minority regions had always been an integral part of China; and b) all the peoples populating China comprise one nation – the *zhonghua minzu* – under the leadership of the Han (Rakhimov, 1981: 35–6).

Within the frame of this ideological 'war' against China in the field of history, Soviet studies highlighted several important aspects of Uyghur history. Most importantly, the national liberation movement of the Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples against the Chinese rulers throughout the eighteenth-twentieth centuries was emphasized in many works. Among these was the work by D. Isiev, *Uigurskoye gosudarstvo Yettishar* [The Yättä Shähär Uyghur State], published in Moscow in 1981.[8] It is not by accident that in a classified Chinese document D. Isiev has been listed as 'a very dangerous Uyghur nationalist historian outside China'.[9] Indeed, in his book, all Uyghur nationalist ideas were openly expressed, starting with the opening statement: 'The history of the Uyghur states goes back to ancient times. The first Uyghur kingdom came into being in 126 BC' (Isiev, 1981: 1). Isiev then focuses on the early national liberation movement of the Uyghurs against the Chinese, which led to the founding of the Uyghur state of Yättä Shähär, 1864–1877. In contrast to the Chinese interpretation, which sees the Qäshqär [Kashgar] Emirate as a mere invasion by the Khokand adventurer Yaqub Beg, D. Isiev names it a 'Uyghur state'.[10]

6 There are discrepancies in the Soviet academic writings on the definition of 'East Turkestan'. Some scholars used this term broadly, understanding by it the whole territory of the province of Xinjiang (e.g. D. Isiev). Others applied this term exclusively to Southern Xinjiang (Kashgaria), distinguishing it from Zhungharia in the North. The latter is reflected in the title of the book by the Uzbekistani scholar of Uyghur origin, A. Khodzhayev: *Tsinskaya imperiya, Zhungariya i Vostochnyi Turkestan* [The Qing Empire, Zungaria and East Turkestan] (1979).

7 On the history of the East Turkestan Republic (ETR), cf. Forbes (1986); Benson (1990); Wang (1999).

8 The Uyghur version of this book has been published in 1990 in Kazakhstan (Isiev, 1990).

9 Personal interview with an immigrant from China, September-October 2003.

10 For a recent study on the Qäshqär [Kashgar] Emirate see Kim (2004).

As I noted earlier, certain aspects of Uyghur history have been interpreted by Soviet scholars differently, depending on the nature of Sino-Soviet relations. For example, during the period of great friendship in the early 1950s, Soviet scholars followed the Chinese interpretation of historical events. Hence, the East Turkestan Republic (1944–49) was initially described as a popular revolt that was part of the greater Chinese anti-Guomindang democratic socialist revolution. However, with the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, writings on this subject began to highlight its anti-Chinese nature, though it was still understood as part of a democratic movement. In the 1960s, a dissertation on this subject was defended by a Uyghur scholar from Uzbekistan, M. Kutlukov (1958). In general, this topic has been a sensitive one in the USSR because of Soviet involvement in the founding of the ETR, which was thoroughly concealed by the Soviets at the time. For this reason, in the USSR any extensive research on the ETR was forbidden in the 1960s, and it became a taboo topic in scholarly circles. Hence, N.N. Mingulov, a historian from the Academy of Sciences, was never able to defend his dissertation on the ETR, written during the period of Sino-Soviet friendship, despite the publication of some of his articles (Mingulov, 1968: 80–8).

Nevertheless, in the 1970s the Soviets released a publication of memoirs by the former vice commander in chief of the ETR National Army, Zunun Teipov, in Uyghur (in Almaty) and in Russian (in Moscow). While the book focused on the initial period of the so-called Ili rebellion which had led to the establishment of the ETR, it also gave a general summary of the history of the administration. The Russian version of the book was published in Moscow in 1974 under the title *V bor be za svobodu* [Struggling for Freedom] (Teipov, 1974). Its Uyghur version came out in Almaty in 1977 under the title *Shärqiy Türkistan yäridä* [On the Land of East Turkestan] (Teipov, 1977). The preface to the Uyghur version of the book reads:

> These memoirs narrate the national liberation movement of the people of East Turkestan against the Guomindang Chinese colonizers; how, as a result of this movement, they founded the East Turkestan Republic in the three prefectures, along with its National-liberation Army; and how they were liquidated by the group of Mao Zedong. Though this is the subjective personal memoir of a single individual, we can however say that it reflects a great national liberation movement in the history of the whole Uyghur people (Teipov, 1977: 2).

This publication was sanctioned by the Soviet Communist Party as part of its anti-Chinese ideological attack. Its introduction was written by T. Rakhimov, who at that time worked for the Central Committee of the CPSU in Moscow. The Soviet attitude toward the East Turkestan Republic was formulated in this introduction: the ETR was a national-liberation movement against the reactionary Guomindang regime that oppressed the local peoples; this movement accomplished its task with the victory of the Chinese Communists and the establishment of the PRC in 1949. It went on to criticize the Chinese Communists' nationality policy, which ostensibly contradicted true Marxist ideas. This was the first publication in which Soviet involvement in the ETR was indirectly recognized.

In the 1970s, the Institute of the Far East in Moscow published officially sanctioned research in its Bulletin. Several issues were written by A.A. Khakimbayev

(1971; 1973; 1978), a former high ranking official of the ETR, who discussed the history of Xinjiang in the 1940s-70s, including the national liberation movement of the Uyghurs. A.A. Khakimbayev was one of the persons who accompanied Säypidin Äzizi, a key figure within the administration of the ETR, to Beijing in 1949 to meet with Mao Zedong. He thus shared the responsibility for handing over the Ili administration to the Chinese Communist government.

Of course, not all the research topics encouraged by the Soviets concealed a political agenda. The history and culture of the Uyghurs were also studied within the general framework of projects on the Central Asian peoples. Thus, descriptions of Soviet Central Asian peoples also contained informative references to the Uyghurs (cf. Zakharova, 1959). Another politically neutral element of Soviet Uyghur studies was the contribution of Russian travellers to academic research on East Turkestan, which not only established the predominance of Russian scholars in the field of Central Asian Studies, but also made an important contribution to academic knowledge of the Uyghur homeland. Some aspects of this contribution were discussed by the Uyghur historian from Almaty, G.M. Iskhakov, in his '*Etnograficheskoye izucheniye uighurov Vostochnogo Turkestana russkimi puteshestvennikami*' [Ethnographic Study of the Uyghurs of East Turkestan by Russian Travellers] (1975).

However, the most popular theme, exploited extensively by Soviet ideologues, was the history of the Uyghurs in Soviet Central Asia. These works glorified the achievements of the Soviet Uyghurs in all spheres of life in comparison with their cousins in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). The propagandist nature of academic and popular writings on the Soviet Uyghurs is witnessed by books such as *Vozrojdennyi uigurskii narod* [The Revived Uyghur People] by M. Ruziev (1982) and *Rastsvet uigurskoi kultury* [The Blossoming of Uyghur Culture] by M. Khamraev (1969), whose objective was to demonstrate that only in the Soviet Union were the Uyghurs able to fully exercise their right to the development of their own culture.

With the liberalization of Soviet society in the late 1980s and the growth of nationalism in Soviet Central Asia, the question of the indigeneity of the Uyghurs to Semirech'ye was raised again. While in the 1940s, during the ETR period, the establishment of a Uyghur autonomous unit in Kazakhstan had theoretically been possible, after the founding of the PRC this region became the object of possible territorial claims by the unified Chinese nation-state. For this reason, Soviet historiography subsequently supported research substantiating the opposite view, that is the migration of the Uyghurs to the Russian Empire. Numerous articles elucidated this topic. The main contributor to this theme was Kabirov (1951), a Uyghur historian who used Russian archival materials to reconstruct the history of the migration of the Uyghurs from the Ili area to Semirech'ye at the end of the nineteenth century. This topic was also discussed in another of his works titled *Ocherki istorii uigurov Sovetskogo Kazakhstana* [Essays on the History of the Uyghurs of Soviet Kazakhstan] (1975). Ironically, during the *perestroika* period, Kabirov took pains to prove that Uyghurs were indeed the native people of Semirech'ye; in 1987–88 he submitted his manuscript *The Uyghurs are Autochthonous to Semirech'ye* (Kabirov, 1988) to the Central Committee of the CPSU, raising indignation among Kazakh intellectuals. The then First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, G.

Kolbin, was subsequently forced to criticize this writing publicly, accusing him as well as other Uyghur intellectuals of Uyghur nationalism. Studies on the Semirech'ye Uyghurs include, among others, a dissertation by R. Karimova on the applied art of Semirech'ye Uyghurs at the turn of the nineteenth century, recently published as a book (Karimova, 2005).

Conclusion

Russian, and then Soviet, scholarship have played a crucial role in the construction of both Uyghur national consciousness and Uyghur nationalist views of Uyghur history. Soviet historiography has consistently characterized the Uyghurs as a people of Central Asian origin indigenous to the territory of today's Xinjiang. Yet at the same time, political interests in Central Asia did not allow the Soviets to recognize the Uyghurs as native to Soviet Central Asia. These political considerations largely determined scholarly priorities for research.

While producing high quality academic research on the Uyghurs and their homeland, the Soviet government at the same time exploited Uyghur history in its ideological disputes with the Chinese communists during the period of Sino-Soviet rivalry (between the 1960s and the early 1980s). It therefore provided unique support to Soviet Uyghur cultural institutions, and encouraged both the cultural development of the Soviet Uyghurs and the conduct of academic research on the origin of the Uyghurs. All this inevitably served to strengthen the Uyghur nationalist vision of Uyghur history on both sides of the Sino-Soviet border.

Soviet scholars worked out a theory on the ethno-genesis (origin and formation) of the Uyghurs, which was expanded by Uyghur historians first in Soviet Central Asia, and then in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of the PRC. Through the study of the Turkic peoples and cultures, Soviet turcology has also contributed to the construction of a Uyghur nationalist historical narrative. The flourishing of Uyghur nationalist historiography in the XUAR, which reached its peak with the publication of the book *Uyghurlar* [The Uyghurs] by Turghun Almas in 1989, has both been inspired by Soviet historiography, and is firmly grounded in the conceptual propositions worked out by Soviet authors.

When studying Uyghur history, especially the ancient and medieval periods, one has to recognize the existence of a close relationship between the Uyghurs and the other Central Asian peoples. Soviet scholarship showed that the Uyghurs (and their ancestors) share a common historical past with their brethren Turkic peoples of contemporary Central Asia, above all the Uzbeks, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. The Central Asian connections of the Uyghurs were considered an important subject within Soviet Uyghur studies. However, over the centuries, the homeland of the Uyghurs has gradually been incorporated into the Chinese polity. This has had an inevitable effect on the development and transformation of Uyghur social and cultural characteristics, since Chinese influence on all aspects of Uyghur life is at present inevitable. Yet this growing Chinese influence is unlikely to eradicate completely the Central Asian socio-cultural features of the Uyghurs.

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PART 2
Uyghur Culture: Issues of Music, Literature and Language

Chapter 3

Cultural Politics and the Pragmatics of Resistance: Reflexive Discourses on Culture and History[1]

Nathan Light

Although ethnicity has become a dominant concern in ethnographic fieldwork and cultural and political analysis, theories of ethnicity remain complex and demand better differentiation among the practices being studied.[2] A key problem is the role of the ethnographer in shaping expressions of ethnic identity. Ethnographers bring specific understandings of ethnicity that have developed through critique of modernity and its ethnic and national forms of social stratification. In addition, ethnography often takes place in contexts involving cross-cultural interaction, and the ethnographer's presence tends to shape interaction in ways that make cultural differences more salient. Researchers are generally outsiders to the group and hence encounter ethnic practices and discourses that have developed in response to contacts with outsiders. Scholarship on ethnicity thus tends to involve an implicit outsider perspective.

Analyses of ethnicity and minority nationalism in China often objectify otherness from the perspective of Han Chinese or from other outsider perspectives. Even when insider experience is adequately considered, informants tend to have a special interest in ideas about ethnicity. Insiders who explain minority group ethnic experiences often have extensive experience as culture brokers. They communicate discursive cultural understandings that are shaped by media representations and reflexive discussions

1 I thank the many people in Ürümchi who helped me with this research. Since my analysis presents people's challenges to the political system I have decided to leave them unnamed except for Ömär Akhun and Quddus Khojamyarov, to whom I dedicate this chapter. Many others have also contributed to this work, but I particularly thank Devin DeWeese, Lynne Hamer, the participants in the 'Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia' conference, especially Rachel Harris, and an anonymous reviewer for Ashgate Publishing.

2 Stevan Harrell (1995) offers one relevant framework for distinguishing ethnic processes in terms of kinds of solidarity (kinship or cultural, habitual or invented), and mechanisms of boundary maintenance (differentiation by caste, kinship or culture) or boundary dissolution (creating new ties through kinship, cooperation, or acculturation). This contrasts with my approach in the present chapter because Harrell understands ethnic identity as involving autonomous dimensions of cultural expression and group boundary formation while I consider ethnicity as involving activities that are analytically but not intrinsically distinct from other reflexive discourses and social and cultural practices.

within their own community. Their engagement with outsiders often results from a heightened interest in cultural theorizing and creating discourses about culture.

As many researchers have shown, ideas about ethnic identity are shaped by local social practices, and interact with ideas about identity defined by gender, religion, language, race, and other locally relevant categories of person. Since I am making a case for studying ethnicity as a part of the study of cultural and historical reflexivity more generally, I will not review here the many approaches to analysing and categorizing ethnic ideas. Instead I analyse discourses in which individuals reflect upon their historical situation and cultural lives. I do not reduce these discourses to reflections of 'Uyghur' ethnic identity, but consider the ways individuals integrate their understanding of identity with broader socio-political and cultural concerns and commitments.

To avoid over-emphasizing ethnic commitments, I explore discourses that comment on culture and history primarily for insider audiences, and examine the negotiation of ideas about collective culture and experience within reflexive social interaction. I will contrast public reflexive discourses producing shared representations of Uyghur culture and history with the spontaneous and non-systematic responses that undermine such official discourses.

Reflexivity and Pragmatics

The field of pragmatics – the study of language in use – has developed wide-ranging insights into the ways that communicative interaction develops meanings beyond the explicit semantic or denotative content of linguistic forms. The study of pragmatics has developed out of and alongside of the study of performative language, sociolinguistics, ethnographically contextualized interpretations of cultural performances, and Bakhtinian ideas about the social life of language. In the present chapter, I particularly build on the ways that pragmatics involves communicative context-making and political, social and cultural reflexivity.

Context-making relates to Mikhail Bakhtin's metaphor of words living in the mouths of speakers and carrying traces of their various contexts of use. Scholars of pragmatics and of performance more generally understand expressive culture as both depending upon social, cultural and political context to make sense, but also evoking and emphasizing absent or unacknowledged contexts. Context-making has an important relationship to linguistic reflexivity since speakers have to understand how to provoke mental access to and discussion of aspects of context that are not immediately obvious. When communication makes participants think about unexpected or unconscious aspects of context, they reflect on the communicative means themselves (cf. Duranti and Goodwin, 1992; Lucy, 1993).

Contextualization is an active process central to meaningful participation in social communication. Connecting words and other expressive behaviours to situationally relevant dimensions of experience – either physically present or mentally accessible – is an ongoing and interactive construction (Bauman and Briggs, 1990). Particularly relevant to reflexivity about identity and culture are the ways that context-making can activate coded political and ideological meanings. Within China's controlled public

discursive sphere, allusions to alternative contexts can subvert and comment upon political domination without directly challenging it. In fact, ethnic reflexivity and self-definition have become important within China precisely because they provide publicly acceptable modes of discourse about politicized values, history and culture. Discussions of ethnic culture and history allow participants to covertly discuss the limits of political discourse more generally because ethnic identities are tolerated forms of cultural, political and historical difference. Rather than shouting for political rights or directly challenging systems of domination and control individuals can instigate debate, explore the operations of discursive control, and test and remind others of the limits on allowable discourses.

James C. Scott's (1985, 1990) investigation of peasant resistance explores material and discursive means of surreptitiously undermining dominant economic and political relations in Malaysian society. He shows that Malaysian peasants challenge the hierarchical relations of social, political and cultural production under which they live by minor and surreptitious vandalism, theft and even malicious gossip. Such covert resistance enables peasants to create public behaviours that uphold dominant interpretations of social hierarchy and authority, while the surreptitious resistance that Scott explores critiques ideological and economic domination without attaining systematic expression: the resistance remains opportunistic. Likewise, in the cases I explore here, Uyghur public performances conform to systematic political discourses and uphold dominant ideologies, while challenges and debates emerge on the margins, among friends and in asides and jokes. Such discussions of the politics of social and cultural control are edited out of what Scott describes as the 'public transcript,' but are moments for reflexive exploration and critique of the relations of cultural and discursive production. Published analyses of ethnicity and official discourses revolve around organized conceptual systems and practices. The 'hidden transcript' is more difficult to analyse because it consists of disorderly products of opportunistic, minor resistances that avoid overtly threatening the organization of power or offering systematic alternatives.

In his analyses of peasant resistance, Scott finds the hidden transcript emerging from practices that cannot be seen as principled collective action intentionally directed at changing the material relations of production. He works to recuperate the anonymous, self-interested and opportunistic acts of resistance that respond to shared experiences but do not involve clear collective or class-conscious goals (1985: 289–98). Where Scott understands survival and self-interest as important motivations for material forms of resistance, Uyghur discursive resistance seems to be propelled by the demands of meaningful communication, openness, honesty and self-respect. Honest communication with trusted others demands abandoning the prevarications of the public transcript. Among Uyghurs the hidden transcript reveals honesty and resistance as sources of humour in more intimate social exchange. The participants may not be able to change the rules but they do not feel the need to take them seriously, and rather than denying their true feelings and frustrations, they present them through joking and other non-systematic disruptions of dominant systematic ideological discourses.

I propose a heuristic distinction between two genres of Uyghur social play, jokes and joking. Jokes are usually performances in which one person recounts to an

audience after a brief introduction in which the teller prepares the audience to stop and listen to a *chaqchaq* (joke). Many examples of *chaqchaq* appear in Rudelson (1997); Bovingdon (2002) and Dautcher (1999). What I propose to describe as joking is an interactive form that is not formally framed as a separate performance, but is a mode of interaction that emerges when someone sees a moment to give a funny twist or commentary on an ongoing social event. Because these are not formal texts that are repeated, they are less systematic ideological critiques, and more opportunistic resistance to many kinds of social organization. Those who can skilfully seize opportunities for such humour are highly appreciated in Uyghur gatherings. Keith Basso has described a similarly emergent style of joking among Western Apache: to call attention to supposed ethnic cultural differences, Western Apache will improvise jokes by taking on speech patterns and social attitudes that are felt to be typically Anglo-American. Basso (1979) analyses these events to reveal the cultural rules that underlie this practice, rather than the creative contesting of cultural principles through this cultural reflexivity.

In the absence of contexts for effective public political contestation, individual Uyghurs are culturally reflexive in ways that refer to and challenge the controls on discourses about history, religion, economic activity and public policy. Their individual commitments cannot be reduced to questions of ethnic identity, although ethnicity may be an enabling framework for these debates. Unlike studies of ethnicity in Southwest China that stress the centrality of ethnicity to social interaction (Harrell, 1995; Blum, 2000; Litzinger, 2000; Schein, 2000; Geary et al., 2003), this chapter analyses the pragmatic and processual creation of political and reflexive meanings within the context of Chinese governmental regulation of expressive culture. Rather than assuming a unified ethnic group as the agent and beneficiary of political contestation, I examine the individual participants and particular contexts for creating meanings in communicative events.

By analysing discourse within specific events I can explore non-systematic forms of resistance to dominant discourses. Approaches to ethnicity which understand people as having stable and determinant identities – or a series of recognizable identities that emerge strategically in different contexts – emphasize aspects of identity that integrate better with official discourses and political controls. The meanings and practices associated with such models of ethnic identity tend to be more conscious and systematically objectified. Below I investigate some of these to provide a background and contrast with more fluid and pragmatically negotiated commitments. Although such systematic formulations of ethnic history and culture are necessarily reflexive they make less use of the covert context-making and strategies of resistance that I will discuss later.

Systematic Formulations of Ethnicity, History and Culture in Xinjiang

It is not hard to see why most recent ethnographers of Xinjiang's Uyghurs and Kazakhs have given ethnic identity issues a central place in their analyses: within Chinese political and social life ethnic complexities have been reduced in many contexts to categorical choices that define one's relation to the housing, school

and workplace organizations that regulate individual lives in China. Although scholars such as Joanne Smith defend the ability of Uyghurs to define their own categories, institutionalized terminologies in fact allow little flexibility, and stable identifications are critical in many public contexts.[3] Chinese government policies direct ethnically-defined public culture so that most socio-cultural activities – language, food, education, and religion – daily confront legally structured boundaries and categories (see also Dautcher, 2004; Dwyer, 2005). Official policies have made the management of ethnic identities central to cultural and political life in Xinjiang. Although researchers understand the 'constructed' nature of Uyghur identity and critique its significance, they tend nonetheless to accept its determinant role in people's lives, rather than investigating the many intersecting and non-systematic cultural and political commitments in which Uyghurs are involved.[4]

Analyses of ethnicity in Xinjiang and elsewhere in Central Asia tend to fall into three groups: those like that of Bovingdon (2002) where the ideas and culture of the entire group are characterized in opposition to the ethnic other, in this case Han Chinese. In contrast, Rudelson (1997) proposes a centripetal model that divides Uyghur identities and interests geographically such that people in Turpan are more orientated towards China while those living in Ili pay more attention to Russia. And finally, Levin's (1996) approach to the study of musical traditions in Uzbekistan focuses on those performing arts preserved by regional, ethnic, religious and gender identity groups in an effort to recover traditions that have been ignored or distorted in the process of making national cultural canons. But all of these approaches attempt to link groups and cultural materials in stable ways. Since identities are not stable, we also must examine the complex negotiations about how people choose to understand their culture in relation to their ongoing social existence. The creation of stable ideas about the self and the group are the focus when people want to deny resistance, conflict, and diverse interests. People seeking to reinforce the political presence of an ethnic group work hard to avoid acknowledging such diversity and change in the group.

In my research in Xinjiang, I found that Uyghur performers, scholars and politicians involved in the *On Ikki Muqam* [Twelve Muqam] musical tradition were shaping it into a public canon to be presented in media and stage venues as an encyclopedic symbol of Uyghur history and cultural richness. Officially supported ideas about the form such public culture should take were closely linked to ideas about modern performing arts that came primarily via Soviet- and Chinese-trained experts, involved in what might be called cultural development work or cultural nation-building. Since early in the 1950s – but with a nearly complete hiatus from 1962 to 1978 – the Uyghur Twelve Muqam have been recorded, transcribed, edited, supplemented and reworked into a vast canon used to demonstrate that Uyghurs are

3 Smith examines clashes between imposed exclusive categories and the reality of complex and shifting identities in her chapter in the present volume and in Smith (2002).

4 Although the political and cultural markers of Uyghur identity constructions have been examined by Gladney (1994, 1996); Rudelson (1997) and Bovingdon (2004), Sean Roberts provides the most insight into the use of identity constructions within social events (2005 and in the present collection).

heirs to an elaborate classical tradition, and thus are both modern and yet connected to a long cultural history. As newly revived and institutionalized public culture the Twelve Muqam were presented as demonstrating enduring Uyghur creative accomplishment, historical continuity and rich cultural traditions, and even provided the foundation for arguments that Uyghurs had been culture donors to both China and the Middle East over the past 1,500 years (Light, 1998).

Nonetheless, the artists at the heart of this long Uyghur Muqam project – to distinguish them from the political and academic experts who were involved – had concerns other than Uyghur cultural identity. In fact, Ömär Akhun and other *muqamchi* (Muqam performers) with whom I worked most closely rarely mentioned the Uyghurness of the Muqam. They were pleased by the rising popular interest in their tradition but they did not concern themselves much with its supposed ethnic 'essence' or make comparisons with other *maqamāt* traditions. Such comparative thinking pertained more to the ethnically-defined cultural reflexivity of musicologists and politicians who were redefining the Muqam as key symbols for representing shared Uyghur culture and history.[5]

Traditional *muqamchi* clearly understood this tradition to be transmitted by specific artists through personal contact. It went without saying that the tradition belonged to performers, not audiences, and so should not be considered the possession of Uyghurs generally. Ömär Akhun was particularly concerned with questions of performance style and song content, and went into great detail about his understanding of musical expressiveness and connecting lyrics and music in the Muqam. He even questioned the veracity of legends about Amannisa Khan, the wife of Sultan Abdurāshid Khan (ruler of the Yäkän [Yarkand] Khanate from 1533 to 1560), who most Uyghurs view as the guiding force of the sixteenth century revival of the Muqam tradition. Ömär Akhun also challenged the officially accepted idea that the Muqam originate in pre-Islamic Uyghur love songs and traditional music. Instead he stressed the expression of Islamic and Sufi ideas in these songs along with the musical evocation of a sense of pensive melancholy known in Uyghur as *mung*.

Ömär Akhun felt that the new modernized instruments that had been adopted for louder stage performance were too coarse. The traditional dutar (two-stringed lute), qalon (zither with 15–19 strings played with a plectrum), and satar (long bowed lute with sympathetic strings), were quieter and more subtle, while the louder instruments should be played outdoors in the countryside. Ömär Akhun himself played the satar and felt that it was the ideal instrument for evoking *mung*.

> If the satar is not tuned the sound is not good. Tuning is the first thing. The satar is not a ghijäk, not a tämbur, not a dutar. Those play everything the same. Those cannot make *mung* come out. If I do not tune the satar [differently] for each Muqam *bäyt* (couplet), then it will not have *mung*. So I tune it five or six ways.

According to Ömär Akhun the chromatic scales of Western music that have been adopted for institutional teaching and ensembles that play the 'improved'

5 Ted Levin describes similar issues in the canonization of a 'frozen' and mono-ethnic version of the Uzbek *Shash maqām* tradition during Soviet Rule (1996: 45–56).

and 'modernized' instruments do not offer the satar's original flexibility and expressiveness.

> The new instruments such as tämbur, ghijäk, and khushtar have one kind of tuning. They do not sound good. They have no sweetness [*mäzälik*], no flavor [*puraq*], no beautiful [*chirayliq*] places. They just play the music straight. The way the Muqam were played before, the flavour was made to come out. Each Muqam had its own taste that came out in its accents [*shivä*]. … Every Muqam has its own characteristics. If one does not follow these characteristics, they all become uniform. [Each Muqam] is separate, with its own accents, and its scale [*küy*] is different. If the scale is not found it will all sound the same.

A skilled *muqamchi* must not only learn to tune and play the instrument sensitively, but must feel the emotions that the music should bring out in his or her audiences.

> If one does not have the *mung* in the heart [*dil*], from the heart [*yüräk*], the hand cannot make the *mung* come out. The *mung* will remain crude [*qopal*]. In the past, masters would practice for many years and only then would be able to play in public. If they could not make the *mung* come out in the music, the people would not cry, it would not reach their heart. And it is the same in the song words. If one cannot make the words full of *mung*, it will be seen as crude. If the words fit the *mung* of the Muqam itself, then it is very beautiful.

The essence of good Muqam performance is *mung*, the deep emotional response to musical skill and powerful words performed for a responsive and sensitive audience. Ömär suggests that a *muqamchi* practices not simply to reproduce traditional musical sound and lyrics, but to perfect music-making to which suitably attuned audiences will respond and to develop a repertoire of lyrics that fit the music.

On the other hand, another performer with whom I worked, Ahmad, was less concerned with the skills that he himself had developed as a *muqamchi*, and more focused on the role his teacher Turdi Akhun had played in enhancing the Muqam tradition he had learned through collecting from other performers and integrating their repertoires into a larger and richer tradition. Both Ömär Akhun and Ahmad spent little energy discussing the ethnic significance of the Twelve Muqam despite daily contact with people who spoke of little else. From these artists' perspectives, performances emerged from the individual's skills and ideas, as well as the learning relationships that linked traditional performers. The Twelve Muqam were popularly held to be an encyclopedia of Uyghur tradition (Light, 1998: 69–70), but this perspective did not fit with these performers' concerns or experience. As a result these artists were not officially accepted as public spokespersons for the Muqam tradition.

The revival of the Twelve Muqam during the 1980s was part of a public renaissance in Uyghur artistic, historical and literary consciousness that began at the end of the 1970s when Uyghurs in China regained the right to embrace and perpetuate many aspects of cultural traditions. Through heavy government support during the 1980s traditional Uyghur genres performed in informal events have been reinvented for presentation in a wide range of more formal venues, as well as for dissemination through educational institutions and media. The most obvious new

contexts are staged song and dance performances that have become a mandatory part of public political rituals.

Creating Independent Cultural Roots

Since political independence continues to be unmentionable under Chinese rule, Uyghurs tend to emphasize cultural and historical independence both from China as well as from Persians and Arabs. Säypidin Äzizi, who became governor in 1955 with the establishment of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, played a central role in establishing the Uyghur Muqam as the centrepiece of Uyghur ethnic culture. As part of the process of making the Twelve Muqam into symbols of cultural independence, Säypidin Äzizi also wrote a play based on the narrative of the legendary sixteenth century Muqam performer and composer Amannisa Khan. This play has been made into a film and the legend has become the key narrative in accounts of the golden age of Uyghur culture during the Yäkän [Yarkand] Khanate.[6]

Säypidin Äzizi also organized the poets and scholars who worked on extensive revisions and reorganization of the Twelve Muqam music and texts during the 1980s and early 1990s. This process finally resulted in some complete sets of audio and video recordings, musical scores and texts that appeared between 1993 and 2002.[7] In addition, important stage and media performances of the Muqam took place in events in Yäkän [Yarkand] in August 1992 and Beijing in November 1992, and a documentary film appeared in April 1993 that narrated Muqam history from the 'primitive' music and dance of the first humans in the Tarim Basin, through the Buddhist court music of the Kushan Empire that governed parts of the Tarim Basin in the first millennium, to the golden age of the sixteenth century Yäkän [Yarkand] Khanate under the rule of the Sultans Sa'id Khan and Abduräshid Khan. These presentations, along with ongoing media attention and programs such as Sunday afternoon radio airplay of Muqam recordings, became ritualized events linking modern Uyghurs with this poetic and musical canon of collective culture, variously described as an encyclopedia of Uyghur culture, a 'folk classical' tradition, and a valuable part of the world cultural heritage.

The place of religious culture in Uyghur history was particularly sensitive because the government opposed positive depictions of religion within public performances. Official policies allowed no broadcasts or stage presentations that promoted religious traditions. As a result, editors of the tradition selected Muqam song texts that emphasized love imagery rather than religious beliefs. In addition, Säypidin Äzizi and many historians in China argued that Sufi *shaykhs* and their followers had oppressed the peoples of Eastern Turkistan and in particular, had suppressed the song and dance traditions that were the supposed heart of Uyghur cultural traditions.

6 Säypidin Äzizi (1983). The film is available in Mandarin Chinese with English subtitles as *Amanisahan*, directed by Wang Yan (Beijing, 1993).

7 *Uyghur on ikki muqami*. Shinjang Uyghur aptonom rayonluq on ikki muqam tätqiqat ilmiy jämiyiti; Shinjang Uyghur aptonom rayonluq mädäniyät nazariti. Shinjang khälq näshriyati, 1993–94, 12 volumes of scores and texts. A further set of revised scores was published in 1997, and a set of CD and VCDs appeared in 2002.

Several musicians went further and explained that during the process of conversion to Islam, Uyghurs had been forced to add Islamic concepts and texts to their song traditions, but such elements were not an essential part of Uyghur tradition. This minority opinion was held by those seeking to exclude changes brought through Arab and Persian Islamic cultural influences in order to return to a purer original culture. Although most Uyghurs did accept Islam as an important aspect of their cultural identity, in the 1980s and early 1990s many did believe that religious officials and Sufis had actively opposed music and dance. Säypidin Äzizi's 1983 drama *Amannisa Khan* promoted this idea by portraying Amannisa Khan, Qidir Khan and Abduräshid Khan creating the Uyghur Twelve Muqam during the sixteenth century Yäkän [Yarkand] Khanate despite attacks by powerful religious figures (Light, 1998). This central conflict in the play became an important element in the 1993 documentary as well.

A related debate centred on how to manage 'Uyghur' classical literature so that it would be accessible to audiences. The many archaic words and Persian loanwords in the classical poetry of the fifteenth century and after by poets such as Fuzūlī, Lutfī and 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī were difficult for modern Uyghur audiences to understand. The editors that Säypidin Äzizi had selected to work on revising the song texts felt strongly that the Muqam lyrics should be rewritten for a popular audience: more familiar words should replace obscure ones and when possible lyrics from 'Uyghur' poets of the last 200 years should replace those of earlier poets so the repertoire would be more representative of recent Uyghur literary tradition. These procedures infuriated more purist literary scholars, who felt that Uyghurs would end up looking foolish if classical texts of poets known throughout Central Asia were updated. When the editors contended that pure Uyghur words were necessary, purists compared the situation to the use of French and Latin words in European languages. Purists did not feel that the extensive borrowing of Persian vocabulary in Uyghur literature undermined the autonomy of Uyghur tradition, and feared that international disdain for simplifying works would damage the image of Uyghurs as valuing their cultural heritage.

These negotiations over the substance and interpretation of Uyghur cultural canons expose the concerns about how to establish claims both to autochthonous cultural and ethnic history as well as to world cultural significance for the Uyghurs as a group. The projection of the present group, defined by geography, language and cultural practices, into the past, which was largely defined as occupants of the Tarim Basin, and the clear sense that these ancestors and their cultural activities had been 'Uyghur,' are important ways to develop symbolic shared cultural possessions. Public definition of identity depends upon controlling narratives of collective history that are used to make claims about the value of Uyghur contributions to Chinese and world civilization. The public discourses established as authoritative and 'true' specify the group's unique origins and accomplishments. Despite the public importance of such discourses, in less public arenas other concerns take precedence.

In the rest of this chapter I will explore the more playful, unsystematic and resistant discourses that emerge fleetingly in everyday life. While not attempting to create fixed ways of understanding the past and present, these discourses represent possible alternatives that may later emerge as more significant challenges to public discourses.

Participants in Uyghur social events often use joking strategies not necessarily because they want to displace dominant discourses, but because challenges to them are means for someone to create a distinctive self through performances that argue for the priority of individual perceptions against supposed collective truths. Rather than granting respect only to didactic systematizers who present serious interpretations of collective history and identity, Uyghurs also valorize and appreciate those who can challenge or joke about such dogmas.

The Pragmatics of Context-Making: Narratives, Cultural Reflexivity and Resistance

Analysis of reflexive narratives about culture and history both illuminates the ways ethnic practices are integrated into reflexive communication more broadly as well as challenge the scholarly reduction of culture and individual motivation to ethnic ideologies. Reducing the dynamics of expressive culture to analysis only along ethnic dimensions has reinforced the idea that ethnic identity and nationalism are *the* dominant concerns of all Uyghurs, and prevented richer analyses of Uyghur cultural experience and self-understanding.[8] In particular, the focus on ethnic nationalism in almost all recent discussions of Uyghur political goals neglects and even trivializes the many ways their political experiences, interests and ideas cross or otherwise disregard ethnic boundaries. The complex ethnic relations within Tarim oasis cities over the past 1,500 years have intersected with a variety of religious, economic, and social boundaries. These boundaries emerge from choices about identities, discourses and practices, and as I discuss below, geography, honorifics, education, and the politics of folklore and drug use can also emerge as contextually relevant concerns that do not have to resolve into stable categories.

Ömär Akhun

When Ömär Akhun confronted state intervention in his tradition, it was his skill as a Muqam performer in calibrating his or her songs to his audiences' emotions and attention that was threatened. His ideal was to perform for elders who were well-versed in Muqam aesthetics and would listen appreciatively: 'If there were 50 people, there might be only two or three who understood Muqam, and the rest would be people of the world [i.e., less spiritually oriented].' He could play for the whole group but they would often ask him to shorten a song. But when those who understood asked him, he had the chance to play entire songs as it should be: 'In the past, the older ones would make the younger ones listen. They would say, "This is gold." At that time young children would listen to their parents, and when told they would sit and listen politely.'

8 Ildikó Bellér-Hann's (1998, 2001) articles on gender and traditional healing in Xinjiang are among the few recent ethnographic investigations of Uyghur culture that do not focus on ethnicity.

The new demands for a canonical 'classical' Uyghur ethnic musical tradition went beyond audience preferences to institutional management of the tunes and lyrics. Scholars and politicians were editing together songs they do not understand, and ignoring the aesthetic criteria that Ömär Akhun felt vital to meaningful performance. He was particularly frustrated in 1991 when the Xinjiang governor Tömür Dawamat announced that the editing of the Muqam was complete: 'These young people did not understand the Muqam they edited... I sent a letter to Beijing [saying they were still incomplete].' Ömär Akhun claims that this letter prompted the former governor Säypidin to order people to record more of his songs, and even to promote the idea that the songs should not just be about love and the worldly feminine beauties of the beloved.

In the new performance and teaching context Ömär Akhun faced culture that was closely tied to political organization. Despite his important participation in reviving and teaching the Twelve Muqam tradition, Ömär Akhun complained that he could not gain acceptance for his versions of Muqam. Instead, all of the respect was granted to the deceased performer Turdi Akhun. Moreover, the Muqam that were being established and promulgated as the standard canon were the creation of scholars and poets who were revising the tradition to be more acceptable within ethnic nationalist concerns. These editors were ineffective collectors but they would not accept Ömär Akhun's assistance to expanding their materials. As Ömär Akhun explained:

> "Ömär Akhun," they said, "we heard that these Muqam were there. But in fact they were not. We went on from town to town but no one sang them, and even Turdi Akhun did not sing them. But you know them, right?" I told them I knew them, but the officials did not pay attention. Säypidin came and said "This man knows them all. I brought him from Qäshqär. Record these Muqam again and edit them together. That way they can be corrected one by one." But the others resisted saying, "This man complete them? Where did he learn them?" Säypidin said [to Ömär Akhun], "It will be good to record them. If they pay you, you do that. If they do not record them from you, if they do not listen to my words, you stay in your house, eat your food, and don't do it." I said, "Alright, that's what I'll do."

Ömär Akhun felt Säypidin supported him while subordinates obstructed the transmission of his versions of the Muqam. The story he told reflected his analysis of being the talented performer trying to perpetuate his tradition within bureaucratizing arts institutions. Rather than simply performing for audiences, apprentices and colleagues, Muqam performers had to join a political struggle over cultural expertise, and the recording and canonization of the tradition shifted it from a performer's creation to a fixed repertoire transmitted within institutions.

Through his comments on his role as culture producer within a disrespectful bureaucracy, Ömär Akhun explored the ways art became subordinated to political and ideological concerns. He criticized reshuffling Muqam songs to increase those about love and decrease those about Islamic themes. He opposed the goals of the ethnic nationalizers and canonizers of this tradition because he recognized that they were trying to exclude the creative role of the performer and establish an unchanging

official cultural canon of the Uyghurs with a reduced role for earlier poetry with explicitly Islamic content or that composed by poets from outside the region.

According to Ömär Akhun, the Muqam singers used to sing both religious and love songs, but mostly by the poets such as Lutfī, Navā'ī, Fuzūlī, Sakkākī, and Huwaydā who wrote poems that 'spoke of religion, the pure road of God, about the Creator and the like. But now these have been put aside, and the *ashiq* ["lovers" of God, that is dervishes] songs are very widely performed.' Ömär Akhun thus regretted the shift from poetry on more orthodox Islamic themes to the love songs which he felt appealed more to the prurient interests of the young.

While Ömär Akhun was willing to challenge the new bureaucratic arts systems explicitly and present his own systematic discussion of the Muqam, he could not. Instead, his discourses about Muqam history and the problems of modifying the songs were piecemeal strategies that emerged in day-to-day experience. He had to use whatever techniques he could to overcome the state monopoly on the mass media and public venues. Like James C. Scott's peasants, Ömär Akhun remained subordinated and dependent upon a hierarchical system of cultural production about which he could complain but not formulate a systematic critique of the relations of cultural production that maintain his subordination. Nor could he develop solidarity with a group of similarly exploited culture workers who in his view remained under-compensated for the great cultural wealth that they had helped create.

Turdi Akhun

The Muqam performer Turdi Akhun is the symbolic founder of the 'modern' tradition primarily because of his performance skills and extensive repertoire, but his death in 1956 shortly after his repertoire was recorded for a second time also meant he was not able to challenge the official revisions of the Twelve Muqam canon. During my fieldwork in Ürümchi, I interviewed Turdi Akhun's former apprentice Ahmad. Ahmad felt he should take responsibility for explaining Turdi Akhun's Muqam tradition and life in detail in order to show how he had become an exceptionally accomplished and unique performer. Turdi Akhun's innovations included adding material to the Muqam repertoire that had not been traditionally performed by *muqamchi* performers. These added segments of the Muqam are known as the *dastan* and *mäshräp* sections, and they had been performed by specialists known as *dastanchi* and *mäshräpchi* or *ashiq*. Formerly these sections had not been associated with the Twelve Muqam tradition. Ahmad wanted to make sure that Turdi Akhun was credited with extending his Muqam repertoire by learning from these performers, and in particular with making the necessary social and cultural adjustments so that he could enter the *ashiq* society and learn this tradition.

> So if you ask what Turdi Akhun's unique characteristic was, it was that when he was young he was very lively [*shokh*]. He liked to have fun, and learned a lot of music at celebrations. ... He learned the Muqam *dastan* from there, but then he thought, "How can I learn the *mäshräp*?" ... There was a place called a *gulkhan*. A *gulkhan* was a house with four big rooms where they sold meat and tea and people smoked hashish [*näshä*]. ... The hashish would be in a central pipe and people would sit around and each smoke through their own tube. Turdi Akhun would smoke it like that. He went there with the intention of learning the *mäshräp*, but he could not have learned it if he did not smoke. Later the Chinese said that it was opium [*äpiyün*], but it is not opium, it is something else. ... Everyone who was in the *gulkhan* was an *ashiq*. Usually people of other professions would not go.

Ahmad tells this story because of criticisms levelled at the *ashiq* performers for their violations of social norms and controls. They were widely viewed as threats to religious orthodoxy but found popular acceptance as musical performers and holy ascetics.[9] Under Chinese rule they have been persecuted as destructive influences on society, and within the anti-imperialist rhetoric of the PRC, opium in particular has been rejected as a symbol of the social decay that rendered China vulnerable to foreign domination. Turdi Akhun's music may have been exceptional but his social activities exposed him to criticism and Ahmad attempts to protect his reputation from negative judgements about his drug use. In addition to imposing moral and political understandings shaped by their own historical experiences of imperialism, the Chinese misidentify the drug used and rejected the argument that Turdi Akhun had to conform to *ashiq* culture in order to learn *ashiq* music. The exclusion of *ashiq* culture, like the exclusion of Ömär Akhun's Islamic values, purifies Muqam music of tainted ideologies and leaves it a more flexible vehicle for conveying new ideologies.

Ahmad grounds his argument in the links among between performance genres, social contexts and associated cultural practices. He makes his argument explicit only at the level of these logical connections but does not extend it to a critique of the shifting power structures that have altered the paradigms for judging cultural practices. He never states that communist ideology raises these questions about Turdi Akhun's moral standing, but rather alludes to the political context that interpreted *ashiq* activities negatively. Like Ömär Akhun, Ahmad is dependent upon and contributes to perpetuating the systems of cultural production that allow him to participate in canonizing and performing the Uyghur Twelve Muqam. Political officials never publicly criticized Turdi Akhun for consuming hashish because they were preserving his image as culture hero, but Ahmad responded to criticisms that are voiced by other participants in insider or 'backstage' contexts of cultural production. His comments call upon the listener, in this case myself, to infer these politicized scenes of cultural reflexivity as the relevant contexts. Ahmad overcomes the threats to his teacher's reputation with an alternative logic of heroic artists braving the dangers of the *gulkhan* and its drug use in the quest for a broader artistic repertoire, and to prevent the music from being irretrievably lost. Rather than a systematic revaluation of *gulkhan* and *ashiq* or their relation to Uyghur identity, this is a strategic logic that valorizes Turdi Akhun's own work without making larger claims.

Likewise, in attributing to Turdi Akhun the extension of the Muqam repertoire to include *dastan* and *mäshräp* Ahmad does not directly challenge the officially-disseminated description of the Muqam tradition, or the political use of the tradition

9 See Gunnar Jarring (1985–86). Ahmad frequently characterized *ashiq* musicians as performers who would play the *sapayi* (instruments made from goats' horns with two iron rings at the end), beating them against their own shoulders until blood splattered from them.

to suggest a long and stable cultural history. Instead he pursues the more immediate goal of claiming more agency for Turdi Akhun in making the tradition.

Quddus Khojamyarov

In 1992, the famous Uyghur composer Quddus Khojamyarov came from Kazakhstan to Ürümchi to lecture and advise on program development at the Xinjiang Art College. Although trained as a classical composer in Moscow, Quddus had extensive experience with the development of the Uyghur Twelve Muqam tradition in the Soviet Union and Xinjiang, and felt that converting Muqam from 'chamber music' (*kamernaya muzyka*) to a staged production damaged the tradition. He was one of the few Uyghurs who in the early 1990s was already outspoken in his defence of Muqam traditions against the modernizations that made them supposedly more presentable in front of large audiences.

> In 1957 it was good here. The texts were pronounced clearly and there were only six to ten musicians, performing in a hall, not a theatre. Muqam should be performed as chamber music. At that time only the *mäshräp* [section] included dancing. Now one finds dancing all the way through. ... The shouts and leaps were learned from the Russians. They are chaotic. The Muqam should be emotion and philosophy, but have been made into a song and dance mess. ... The guitar versions are just another example of the poor Muqam, pulled this way and that, played this way and that. The Muqam have lasted hundreds of years and now have been destroyed in twenty years. They are a golden heritage and must not be changed.

He distinguished borrowing elements from the Muqam for creating new 'modern' compositions and modifying the Muqam themselves, which he felt should be preserved.

> They keep the old texts to Chinese opera and Japanese *gagaku*. Something new should be done with Western style music. I took rhythm, melody and themes but did not mess with the Muqam themselves. My soul aches when I see attempts at changing the Muqam themselves.

In addition to such explicit challenges to the cultural development work on the Twelve Muqam, Quddus also resisted political discourses that sought to impose a Sinocentric perspective on what he regarded as Central Asian cultural and historical realities. He took advantage of his status as an esteemed foreign visitor to call attention to and oppose using the name Xinjiang for the Uyghur homeland. In the process he invoked the long attachment of Uyghurs to the Taklimakan region, and made the desert's silence into a metaphor for Uyghur isolation and inactivity.

During the recording of an interview for radio broadcast, Quddus was asked how he had composed his 'Taklimakan' symphony. He began with an account of the Russian explorer Przhevalsky, who he says 'went throughout East Turkestan, and wrote a book about it. He wrote that 'the Taklimakan is now sand, sand lying completely silent [*jimjit yatqan qum*]. There is nothing there.' At this point the radio interviewer interrupts him to explain that they will not be able to broadcast

the interview if he refers to 'East Turkestan,' and he will have to say Xinjiang instead. Quddus laughs, saying 'For that time Xinjiang is the wrong term. Xinjiang means "New Dominion." East Turkestan is the old name for this old place.' They negotiate for a while, and one of the other interview participants provides the eventual solution, 'If you say "the Uyghur homeland" [*wätän*] that will be fine.' They begin the interview again, and Quddus again describes the empty Taklimakan of the present, saying 'at one time the Uyghur kingdom [*mämlikät*] bloomed here.' He tells that the history of the Uyghur kingdom and its eventual abandonment to the desert impressed him deeply, so he decided to write his symphony as a memorial [*khatirä*] to it. He explains that the symphony expresses the coming of people, the irrigation and cultivation of the desert, and the arrival of birds and animals. But after a long period of prosperity, the kingdom is swallowed up in a sand storm. The symphony ends with a foreshadowing of the future, when the 'flourishing past will return.' They stopped recording at this point, and Quddus jokes about the absurdity of the name Xinjiang, since the idea 'New Dominion' only makes sense for Chinese newcomers. In these comments Quddus links the non-Turkic word and its meaning in Chinese with the Chinese-dominated political system that has imposed the Chinese term even when people speak Uyghur (Dwyer, 2005: 51). But he uses this argument not to emphasize the ethnic divide or recent arrival of many Han Chinese, but the illegitimate political control of language. He challenges these linguistic controls and boasts of avoiding both 'East Turkestan' and 'Xinjiang' by talking about the 'Uyghur homeland.' Joking about and resisting the government's control on public discourse becomes part of what Scott calls the hidden transcript of the interaction, but here the hidden transcript is a conscious backstage negotiation about the coding used to create officially acceptable public discourse.[10] The participants share in figuring out how to make a taped interview that can be acceptably edited for broadcast. Quddus at least makes clear that he sees omitting the name 'Xinjiang' from the recording will signal to his audience a rebellion against its inappropriateness, and he takes overt pleasure in evading the political control of public discourse through this subtle resistance. Rather than emphasizing Han/Uyghur ethnic opposition he calls attention to the operations of political domination and his strategy of subversion.

Censorship, by proscribing some words and ideas while prescribing others, imposes powerful political controls on culture, history, geography and social identities. As the first audience for public discourse, censors regulate access to the public, and their concerns must be met before a speaker can address a broader audience. But the censors can neither create authentic messages nor dictate message content effectively because listeners would dismiss rote performances as inauthentic. By careful selection of their words individual speakers such as Quddus can comment on the political situation and on censorship itself without explicitly referring to them. While Quddus does not overtly critique the system of control he challenges its operation in particular contexts.

10 For the concept of coding as a way to subvert the rules of dominant expressive culture, see Joan N. Radner and Susan S. Lanser (1987) and articles in Joan Radner (1990).

Resistance in Official Publications

My next example also relates to naming cultural practices, and shows another way that surreptitious resistance can intervene in public, politicized discourse and disrupt the use of naming to reinforce power. In this case, the name in question is the title of a collection of Uyghur folklore published in 1980. The title page is unexceptional: after the title *Uyghur khälq qoshaqliri* [Folk Songs of the Uyghurs] it specifies the publisher Shinjang khälq näshriyati and Ürümchi and the year 1979 (the date of editorial completion). The work contains extensive fabricated folklore. Under the heading *Azatliq qoshaqliri* [Songs of Liberation] the contents page lists sixteen songs with titles such as: 'About the Party', 'About Chairman Mao', 'About Premier Zhu', 'About Committee Chairman Zhu De', 'About Chairman Hua', 'About Liberation', 'About the People's Liberation Army', 'About Nationality Unity', 'About Labour', etc.. A surreptitious challenge to this officially approved fake lore emerges when one turns over the title page and reads in the colophon above the printing information a slightly different title: *Uyghur khälq qoshaqliri*? with a question mark that undermines the easy acceptance of these political songs as folk songs. Although easily dismissed as a typographic error if the typesetter was challenged, the question mark resists presenting new works as elements of traditional expressive culture, and calls attention to the way Chinese Communist Party mythologies are ratified as authentic folk beliefs. Overlooked by the censors, this mark places an ironic frame around propaganda.

When the typesetter of this colophon title inserts the question mark, or when Quddus challenges the name Xinjiang, they subvert the official names and conventional meanings that support political mythologies. These sly challenges reflect the ways political domination of expression provokes challenges that undermine systematic ideologies and call attention to the domination itself.[11] No matter how vigorously it attempts to naturalize its discourses domination provokes its own exposure. Such exposure does not necessarily lead to change – neither subversive punctuation nor the phrase 'Uyghur homeland' create political freedom – but such resistant acts do contribute to the undercurrent of creative strategies for coded commentaries on domination and official mythologies.

11 Homi Bhabha's article 'Sly Civility' (in Bhabha, 1994: 93–101) explores colonial responses to surreptitious resistance. His model suggests that authoritarian surveillance of natives by representatives of the Chinese state results from paranoia about the natives' refusal to embrace the colonial project and its ideology. His Freudian reading is suggestive but ultimately reductive of politics to the psychic drives of colonizers rather than explaining why subalterns would resist in sly yet civil ways. James Scott's discussion of how people resist pragmatically and yet appear to conform with the dominant ideology gives more insight into motivations, but less discussion of the rhetorical forms used to conceal resistance.

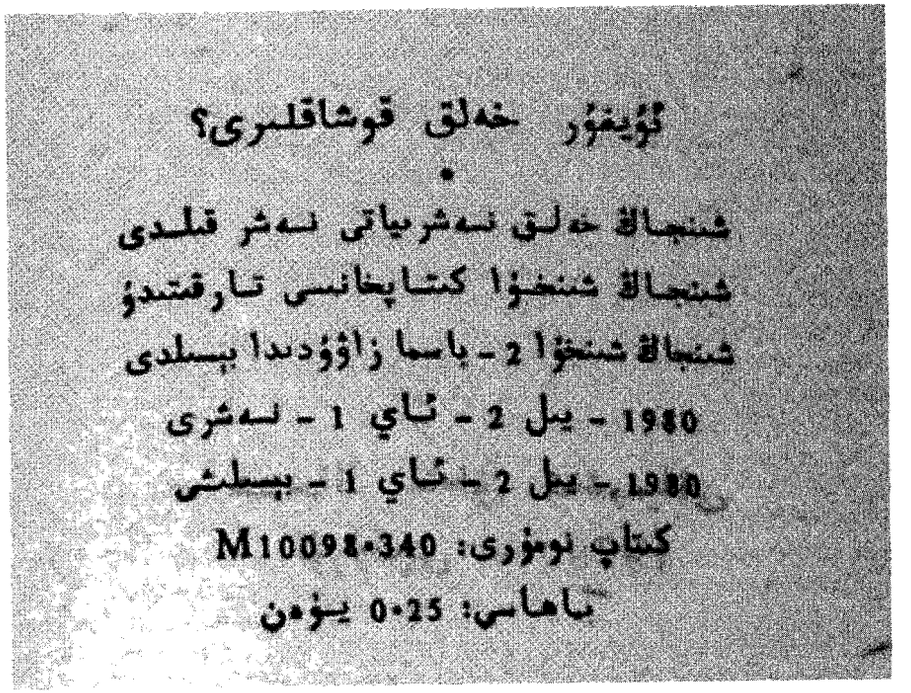

Figure 3.1 Uyghur Khälq Qoshaqliri [Folk Songs of The Uyghurs] Shinjiang khälq, näshriyati, 1979, inside cover

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have described a few among the many ways Uyghurs resist official political discourses and create alternatives. I argue that the stress on ethnic identity in China has prompted researchers to make it central to their analyses while ignoring non-ethnic modes of critical reflexivity on politics, culture and history. Ethnic identity projects involve cultural solidarities that can legitimate political discourse when more overtly political identities such as that suggested by the term 'East Turkestan' are censored. But ethnicity can also be readily channelled through official control of public cultural discourses, and thus its political potential may easily be co-opted. Emphasis on shared ethnic experience and cultural solidarity – or its lack – turns attention away from individual and interpersonal reflexivity and resistance: Turdi Akhun and Ömär Akhun become politically manipulated ethnic symbols rather than living artists. Ömär Akhun felt that he was being replaced by written texts about himself even though he was still alive:

> I have lived here in person for many years, but they tell about how I did this and how I did that, just as if when there is no more meat to sell, they sell lungs. Like saying, 'Oh madam, this meat is very good,' when there is nothing but rabbit left. That is how that sort of talk feels in my heart.

To discover individual cultural experiences and understandings and the political uses of these in everyday interaction, researchers should move beyond the nameable identities to observe also the sly, fleeting, ambiguous and deniable subversions and refusals. James Scott's concept of everyday covert resistance reminds us not to expect systematic discussions of strategies and goals. In studies of linguistics, Michael Silverstein and other pragmatics researchers emphasize that many of the ways to convey meaning remain subconscious to participants.[12]

With the image of the *jimjit yatqan qum* ('silently lying sand') that conceals the remains of Uyghur civilization, and in his refusal to use the term 'Xinjiang' Quddus suggests that silence and resistance are not incompatible. Named identities are not necessarily sources of resistance, since knowing and labelling the sources and authors of resistance can undercut its power. Censors and others attempt to identify the instigators and weed out their work, but disruptive signs and refusals to speak required words continue to disrupt the façade of authoritative discourse.

Quiet resistance is not only a strategy for those with little power. Despite his status as one of the most important Xinjiang politicians, Säypidin Äzizi himself codes messages for his audience in his 1983 play *Amannisa Khan*. People I spoke with about editing the modern Twelve Muqam repertoire often compared it to similar work supposedly done by Amannisa Khan and Abduräshid Khan in the Yäkän [Yarkand] Khanate. In his play about these Muqam creators Säypidin Äzizi describes their conflict with the conservative Sufi Khwājas. When Amannisa Khan complains to Qidir Khan about the political challenges they face in working on the Muqam, Qidir Khan responds, 'The situation is tense and complex. We must be careful. The most important is increasing Sultan [Abduräshid Khan]'s security. We must help the Sultan [...]'. In 1983, the Chinese government was also an important conservative force that imposed ideological constraints on the project of making a public Muqam canon, so it is not hard to understand this line as an appeal from the play's author to his audience about the analogical situation in which he needed popular support for his accommodations of Chinese policies.[13]

Of course, helping the Sultan or Säypidin Äzizi simply reinforces one powerful actor against others, but the use of this coded message to call attention to analogical contexts of power in which the 'we' of culture heroes in the play becomes the 'we' of the ethnic audience should remind us that no one is free of surveillance and political controls. In fact Säypidin Äzizi's activity as defender of Uyghur ethnic culture gains rhetorical strength from the implication that he does this despite political threats. Like Turdi Akhun entering the *gulkhan* of the *ashiqs* to rescue Uyghur musical tradition, Säypidin Äzizi implies that he faces shadowy forces bent on destroying ethnic culture in his mission to establish a canonical Uyghur Muqam tradition.

12 Silverstein (1979) points out that J.L. Austin's speech act theory involves explicit performative functions that speakers readily objectify and bring into conscious understanding in a 'native pragmatic ideology' while other equally important kinds of pragmatic language functions are not so readily objectified.

13 The allegorical story 'Frog on a Perch' by Säypidin analysed by Gardner Bovingdon (2002: 60) similarly defends Säypidin's relationship to the people of Xinjiang.

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Chapter 4

Situating the Twelve Muqam: Between the Arab World and the Tang Court

Rachel Harris

Introduction

The *On Ikki Muqam* (Twelve Muqam) have today achieved iconic status as one of the principal cultural assets of the Uyghur nation. As Nathan Light discusses in this volume, the very idea of the 'Twelve Muqam' as a set of fixed musical suites with a long historical pedigree is itself a modern, nationalist invention. But where does this leave us in terms of understanding this musical tradition within the wider cultural context? Current debates surrounding the Muqam seek to situate their historical roots on a cultural-geographical axis between China's 'Western Regions' (*Xiyu*) and the Arab world. In this chapter I argue that a better understanding of these musical traditions can be achieved if we move away from the portrayal of linear development of discrete national repertoires which processes of canonization and study promote. If we seek to compare these traditions, then our comparison should encompass not only musical sounds and structures but also the social and cultural processes through which the music is given meaning and life. What emerges is a picture of overlapping local musical traditions and practices across Central Asia, from Khorezm to Qumul to Kashmir. These traditions clearly form a part of the wider Islamic musical world, and are closely related to other aspects of this wider culture, notably Sufism. Chinese musical influence on Uyghur traditions is extremely rare, and such examples that can be found are strongly contested by Uyghur nationalists.

Maqām Systems across the Islamic World[1]

Across most of the Arab world, from North Africa to the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, the concept of *maqām* denotes a system of modes – collections of pitches and conventions of melody – which form the basis for musicians to create, improvise, or at least vary in the course of performance, their own unique musical expressions (Marcus, 2002). In Turkish classical music we find a similar system of *makam* – modes – which are also the basis for improvization and composition (Signell, 2002). If we move eastwards across Asia we find the term recurring, but the fundamental concept and practice of *maqām* as mode begins to shift, to be

1 For overviews of concepts and structures see Powers (1989: 40–54), and Powers and Wiering (undated).

understood not only as modal system but also as designating a repertoire of more or less fixed pieces.[2] Thus, the Iraqi Maqām (al-*maqāmat* al-*irāqiyya*) refers to a repertoire of sung poetry consisting of compositions in suite form with contrasting rhythmic patterns (Hassan, 2002). In Azerbaijan the term *muğam* refers to large-scale suites of sung poetry with instrumental accompaniment (Djani-Zade, 2002).[3]

Arriving in Central Asia, with the Uzbek–Tajik *maqām* traditions we first find the practice of referring to a set number of fixed *maqām* suites: the Bukharan *Shash* (six) *Maqām*, the Khorezm *Alti-yarim* (6½) *Maqām*[4] and the Khoqand *Chahar* (four) *Maqām* (Karomatov, 1992). Slightly to the south, Kashmiri Sufi orders perform *maqām* suites known collectively as *Sūfyāna Mūsīqī* (Pacholczyk, 1996).[5] Finally, the easternmost occurrence of the term *maqām* in yet another variant spelling, and the Kashgar-Yarkand *On Ikki* (twelve) *Muqam*, the *Turpan Muqam* (with eleven recognized suites), the *Dolan Muqam* (reliably only nine suites, although both these traditions like to claim a full complement of twelve), and the *Qumul Muqam* (which makes extravagant claims to fifteen).

East of Qumul the use of *maqām* terminology comes to an end. Music cultures further east, Han Chinese instrumental traditions for instance, do gather their music into large-scale suites,[6] but there is no sense by which they could be included in the larger musical world which stretches from North Africa to Xinjiang. Although extremely varied this musical world shares numerous basic philosophical and scientific concepts and terminology, especially in the more prestigious 'art' or 'classical' musical traditions whose primary expression is the *maqām*. Also shared are musical practices (the highly melismatic solo vocal line; additive rhythms beat out in combinations of 'dum' and 'tak' on frame drums), musical instruments (small ensembles of plucked and bowed lutes, spike fiddles and drum), and conventions of performance and poetry (themes of ecstasy and longing, the classical Arabic *aruz* metre).

The many names of the *maqām* recur and vary across the different repertoires described above: from the more common modes in Arab classical music: *rāst, bayyāti, hijaz, sabā, huzām, nahāwand,* to the numerous *makam* of Turkish art music which include *beyati, dugah, segah, rast, huseyni,* to the six suites *buzruk, rast, nawa, dugah, segah* and *iraq* of the *Shash Maqām*. Many of these names find echoes in Uyghur *muqam* traditions (see Figure 4.1); but what's in a name? Comparative studies of *maqām* across the Islamic world demonstrate that there is no consistent

2 The suite is also a fundamental organizing principle of the repertoire in the Islamic Mediterranean world, but the term *maqām* does not refer to suite: instead *nawba* in Morocco, *mā'luf* in Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, *fasil* in Turkey.

3 In these traditions the ideas of improvisation and mode are not completely lost. Iraqi singers embellish and vary their repertoire, while Azeris perform an unmetered improvised opening section based on the mode of the *muğam*.

4 *Panjigah Maqām* has only instrumental pieces, so it is counted as half a *maqām*.

5 Pacholczyk documented 47 distinct *maqām* being performed in the 1970s.

6 The *badaqu* (8 great pieces) of the *Jiangnan sizhu* (Shanghai silk-and-bamboo) tradition, or the *badatao* (8 great suites) of the Shanxi shawm bands e.g., cf. Jones (1998).

link between *maqām* name and mode across the different regional traditions, and further that the practice of these modes have changed over the course of history.[7]

rak – chäbbiyat – mushawräk – charigah – pänjigah – özhal

äjäm – ushshaq – bayat – nawa – segah – iraq

Figure 4.1 (Generally agreed) names of the *On Ikki Muqam*

Debates in the Uyghur Scholarly Literature: Between the Western Regions and the Arab World

This brief overview is not meant to imply that the flow of cultural influence runs simply from west to east. I have followed the accepted geographical paths of Western scholarship,[8] but I am aware that the broad thrust of Uyghur scholarship in Xinjiang has tended to adopt a reverse lens. The Uyghur scholar Abdushukur Muhämmät Imin, in the first Uyghur language work on the *On Ikki Muqam* to appear in print in Xinjiang after the Cultural Revolution, argues that the Arabic language terminology which they currently employ was comparatively recently grafted onto an already existent body of music. The influential novelist Abdurehim Ötkür contributed to the *On Ikki Muqam* debate in 1992, arguing strongly against the proposition that the *On Ikki Muqam* were in some way 'Arab music'. Like Muhämmät Imin he stressed that the adoption of Arabic names in musical terminology in no way implied a change in the Uyghur 'national character' of the music. Ötkür argues (audaciously) that we should see the broad sweep of cultural and musical influence moving through the medieval Islamic world less from west to east than from east to west. In support of this claim he cites the well-known Arab openness to the cultures of their conquered regions, and the fact that the influential music theorists al-Farabi and ibn-Sina were both born in Central Asia. He concludes that Uyghur music influenced Arabic music at least as much as the other way around (1992: 5–6).[9]

Muhämmät Imin argues in similar vein that the *On Ikki Muqam* not only predate Islam, but are also the root of all *maqām* traditions, spreading westwards under the eleventh-century Seljuq empire (1980). This idea might well raise eyebrows among scholars of Arab *maqām* theory, but it is still quite mainstream in contemporary scholarship and popular discourse surrounding the *On Ikki Muqam*. Ötkür states:

7 Powers (1989) suggests that *segāh* is modally consistent in every tradition except the Bukharan *Shashmaqām* (he does not include the *On Ikki Muqam* in his analysis). Wright (1992) documents historical changes in the modal profile of *segāh*, urging greater caution in the comparative approach.

8 As laid out, for example, in the Garland Encyclopaedia of World Music.

9 For suggestions that the Central Asian suite form may derive from the medieval Arab *nawba* suite form see Jung (1989) and Pacholczyk (1996). The argument is refuted by Wright (2000: 1043).

> The *On Ikki Muqam* are built on the foundation of the ancient music of Kösän (Kucha), Shule (Qäshgär), Yutian (Khotän), Yizhou (Qumul), and somewhat later the *Dolan Muqam*.[10] As they grew, in the process of fixing their musical structure, they absorbed elements from the best musics of other nations and added to their richness and completeness (Ötkür, 1992: 4).

As is often the case in the debate surrounding the *On Ikki Muqam*, there is more than a whiff of Chinese Communist Party ideology in this, an echo of Mao's famous admonition to 'take the best from the West and discard the rest'. Ötkür's core argument concerns the *muqam*'s deep roots in the music of the early Buddhist kingdoms of the 'Western Regions' (*Xiyu*) which we know of primarily through writings in Chinese historical sources, and the Buddhist murals in the Kizil caves near Kucha (cf. Trébinjac, 2000: 221).

Several scholars have perceived apparent similarities between the *On Ikki Muqam* and the famous *Tang daqu* (great suites). These musical suites were performed in the Tang court as entertainment music, and are recorded in Chinese histories as being derived from the music of the kingdoms of the Western Regions, brought to the Tang court in Chang'an as a diplomatic gift. Although there are no extant transcriptions of these pieces, there are descriptions. Scholars have commented on the three-part structure attributed to the *Tang daqu* in historical sources[11] and its extraordinary resemblance to the tripartite structure of the *On Ikki Muqam*[12] (Figure 4.2) (Gu, 1985: 55).

A more recent provenance for the *On Ikki Muqam* is claimed in the tale of the sixteenth-century queen of the Yäkän [Yarkand] Khanate, Amannisa Khan.[13] The source of this tale lies not with Chinese historical records, but with a local scholarly tradition, Mojizi's mid-nineteenth century 'History of Musicians' (*Tävarikhi musiqiyun*).[14] From Mojizi's brief historical notes on Amannisa Khan, Säypidin Äzizi, the former regional chairman of Xinjiang, wove a new narrative which is now widely accepted as historical reality, establishing Amannisa Khan as a major figure in a sixteenth-century project to collect and order a pre-existing set of twelve *muqam* suites. As Light argues, Säypidin created in Amannisa Khan a romanticized historical mirror image of his own efforts to canonize the *muqam*.

10 Ötkür's citation of the *Dolan Muqam* as a stepping stone along the route of development is curious; I will return to this point later.

11 *sanxu* ('scattered' or 'free' section) – *zhong xu* (mid section) – *po* (broken).

12 Comprising the *chong näghmä* (including the unmetered opening *muqäddimä*), *dastan* and *mäshräp* sections.

13 Discussed by Nathan Light in this volume, and in more detail in his PhD thesis (Light, 1998).

14 A copy made in 1919 was discovered in Khotän in the late 1950s, and was translated into modern Uyghur and published in 1982 (Baytur and Tömür, 1982). Translations and commentaries into French and English respectively can be found in Trébinjac (2000) and Light (1998).

Muqäddimä
Chong Näghmä
- *täz* + instrumental *märghul*
- *nuskhä* + *märghul*
- *jula*
- *sänäm*
- *chong säliqä*
- *kichik säliqä* + *märghul*
- *päshro* + *märghul*
- *täkit*

Dastan
- 3-4 *dastan* + *märghul*

Mäshräp
- 4-6 *mäshräp*

Figure 4.2 (Idealised) structure of the *On Ikki Muqam*

For our purposes here, it is more useful to consider Mojizi's original text and what it has to say about Central Asian *maqām* in the nineteenth century. Mojizi presents a shared musical world stretching from Yäkän [Yarkand] to present-day Iran. He portrays *maqām* as musical systems that composers used for singing a poetical text. He distinguishes between these modal systems, which are laid out in fifteenth-century theoretical treatises, and the compositions which are based in them (Light, 1998). Such an understanding is distant from the notion of *maqām* as large-scale suite which dominates the Central Asian (Uyghur and Tajik–Uzbek) understanding today. If we consider the emergence of the *On Ikki Muqam* in the suite form which is familiar to us today, we find that the work of several scholars points at a time frame which is a great deal shorter than even the popular Amannisa Khan tale, let alone stretching back to fourth-century Kösän.

The *On Ikki Muqam* as they are performed and researched today in Ürümchi are largely based on recordings made by the famous folk musician Turdi Akhun in the 1950s, sung with bowed *satar* lute and *dap* frame drum accompaniment. A Chinese musicologist, Wan Tongshu, was sent from inner China to assist the work of recording and transcription. In his introduction to the published transcriptions, Wan suggests that the different sections of the *muqam* were formerly sung by three different classes of musicians in three separate contexts: the *chong näghmä* was formerly performed in the court, the *dastan* (sung excerpts from epic tales) were widespread in the folk context, while the final *mäshräp* sections were sung by Sufi adepts and religious

mendicants (*ashiq*) at shrine festivals. Wan reports that, according to musicians he interviewed, in the late nineteenth century the Qäshqär musician brothers Helim and Selim collected the three sections together and created the muqam as they are known today (Shinjang, 1960: 21).[15] Light's description in this volume of Turdi Akhun's efforts to acquire the *mäshräp* repertoire from the *ashiq* reinforces Wan Tongshu's account. Comparative analysis of *ashiq* songs and the *muqam* by the Ürümchi-based musicologist Zhou Ji lends further support to these oral testimonies (Zhou, 1999).

Claims of long continuity with the music of the Western Regions on the basis of the similarity in structure between the tripartite *Tang daqu* and the tripartite *On Ikki Muqam* become a nonsense if the accounts, and musicological evidence, of Turdi Akhun's work at combining these three disparate repertoires are to be believed. If we seek a better understanding of the *On Ikki Muqam*, then surely more useful results may be obtained by exploring their more recent history, and by attempting to situate them within the wider context of other *muqam* traditions maintained by Uyghurs today, other regional *maqām* traditions, and indeed the Central Asian regional music culture as a whole, regardless of barriers of nationality and divisions between 'art' and 'folk' music.

Regional *Maqām* Traditions from Khorezm to Qumul

There is a striking lack of comparative analysis and in-depth studies of the musical relationship or parallels between what we might regard as the two major Central Asian *maqām* traditions: the Tajik–Uzbek *Shash Maqām* and the Uyghur *On Ikki Muqam*. This is perhaps in part due to the difficulties of conducting cross-border research, and in part due to the nationalist emphasis on establishing discrete national traditions. Although many of the names are shared, comparison of purely musical features does not indicate any direct structural relationships, and the regional styles are distinctive. Indeed, the French musicologists During and Trébinjac (1991: 35) have commented that the wide tessitura and large leaps found in the *On Ikki Muqam* (as in much of Uyghur music) resemble Turkish music more closely than the neighbouring Tajik–Uzbek traditions. Yet if we consider in a broader sense the organizational principles and basic musical features which underpin the Central Asian *maqām* suites then we find many continuities.

The first of these is the core performing group: a lead singer, joined by a few supporting voices, traditionally all male, accompanied by the frame drum *dap* or *dayra* and the long-necked lutes, either the bowed *satar* or the plucked *tanbur*, and sometimes a zither.[16] In all of the *maqām* traditions this core group has been considerably enlarged in professional performance practice over the course of the twentieth century into large instrumental ensemble plus choirs of male and female voices, often singing in carefully arranged parts. Female soloists and instrumentalists have also become prominent in professional performance.

15 This version of events is also given in Ärshidinov (2002).

16 The difference between Uyghur and Uzbek instruments appears to have been less marked before their modification in the twentieth century.

The basic principles of Central Asian suite organization are most clearly seen in the *Shash Maqām* (Figure 4.3) and the *On Ikki Muqam*. Each named suite, for instance *Nawa*, has a distinguishing mode: a basic scale plus melodic motifs. Each named piece within the suite, for example *täz* or *talqin*, is distinguished by a rhythmic pattern laid out by the frame drum. These named pieces occur, at least in principle, in the same order with the same rhythmic pattern in each *maqām*: *täz* in the *On Ikki Muqam* always denotes a slow six-beat pattern, and always follows the opening *muqäddimä*. In parts of the *maqām* one can hear how the melodic motifs are repeated in successive pieces of the suite but they are subtly varied by, as it were, being stretched over the different rhythmic patterns of each piece.[17] This is the core organizational principle. In practice, we should note, none of the traditions possess complete suite cycles, in all of them we find that some *maqām* suites have more pieces than others.[18] This suggests that the suites were never intended to be performed from start to finish, but rather served as a repository, a way of organizing the repertoire.

Instrumental Section (*mushqilat*)

tasnif – tarje – gardun – mukhammas – saqil

Vocal Sections (*nasr*)

1st group of *shu'be* (pieces):
tarana - talqin – tarana – mukhayar – nasr – ufar

2nd group of *shu'be*:
1st sub-suite
sowt – mugulcha – chapandaz – saqinama – ufar
2nd sub-suite
mugulcha - sowt – talqincha – qashqarche – saqiname – ufar
3rd sub-suite
talqincha – chapandaz – saqiname - ufar

Figure 4.3 (Idealised) structure of the *Shash Maqām*[19]

17 This form of variation is found consistently in the second group of *shu'be* of the *Shash Maqām* (Levin, 1984) and throughout the Kashmiri *Sūfyāna Mūsīqī* repertoire (Pacholczyk, 1996: 80–93).

18 The situation is further complicated by the fact that suites frequently modulate into new modes. This is most formalized in the *Shash Maqām* where whole sub-sections are grouped in their own named sub-mode, for instance the first set of *shu'be* in *Nawa Maqām* are all in the mode of *bayat*.

19 Based on the authoritative scores prepared by Karamatov and Rajabov, published in Uzbekistan in the 1960s and 1970s; a fuller diagram is given by Levin and Sultanova (2002: 912).

There is also consistency in the internal organization of pieces. Self-contained phrases are combined and recur in formulaic patterns (for example a, ba, cba, dcba), rising in pitch and intensity towards a high *awj* (climax) before returning more swiftly to the starting pitch range. The overall progression of pieces within the suite is from 'heavy' to 'light', from slow and serious to dance-like pieces. Both the *Shash Maqām* and the *On Ikki Muqam* contain both instrumental and vocal pieces. Prior to the separation of the texts into 'national' languages during the twentieth century, these traditions shared a bilingual Chagatay and Persian stock of poetry drawn from the writings of Fuzūlī, Lutfī, 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī, etc.. The vocal art of *maqām* consists of fitting the poetic metres of the verse to the rhythmic patterns of the music.

Uzbek and Russian scholars have contributed studies of the historical relations between the various *maqām* traditions found in the Tajik–Uzbek cultural sphere. The *Shash Maqām* are known to have been performed by Uzbek, Tajik, and Jewish musicians in the court at Bukhara under the Mangit dynasty which ruled from the late eighteenth century to 1920. The *Shash Maqām* do not appear in the historical record until the late eighteenth century.[20] They are known to have spread to the courts of the neighbouring city states of Khorezm to the west and Khoqand in the Ferghana valley during the course of the nineteenth century. The six and a half suites preserved in Khorezm display a structure almost identical to those of Bukhara, although they include several sections, and an extra half a *maqām* (*Panjigah*) not found in the Bukharan tradition. Their performance style also differs, displaying aspects of intonation and melody typical of the local folk song style.

The Ferghana-Tashkent *Chahar Maqām* diverge more widely from the *Shash Maqām* but are still believed to be a partial or simplified interpretation of parts of the Bukhara cycle. Here the full suite form has been lost,[21] and the named *maqām* – *bay at*, *chargah*, *dug ah-huseyin*, *gulyar-shahnaz* – are different from those of the *Shash Maqām*. The Uzbek musicologist Faisulla Karomatov suggests that following the Russian invasion of Khoqand in the 1860s, some 60 years before Bukhara was taken, Khoqand's court musicians dispersed due to lack of patronage, and for this reason the repertoire survived in that region only in piecemeal fashion (Karomatov, 1992).

The Kashmiri *Sūfyāna Mūsīqī* is a fascinating mixture of Indian and Central Asian strands. Anthologies and theoretical treatises on this tradition also date back to the eighteenth century. The traditional context of this repertoire is in the *mehfil* rituals of the Qadiri Sufis. Sung by the adepts and accompanied by musicians on dulcimer, spike fiddle, lute and *dokra* (the Kashmiri term for the Indian paired *tabla* drums), the *maqām* suites follow the pattern of free-rhythm instrumental opening section, followed by a succession of sung pieces moving from slow to light. The rhythmic

20 They are not mentioned in the 1572 *Risale-i Musiqi* of Darvish Alí Changi, although this text attests that theories of *maqām* were discussed and practised in the region at this time. The first written records of the *Shash Maqām* appear in the *Kulliyat* (anthologies of song texts), and they are believed to be based on the urban song traditions of Bukhara, cf. Levin (1984) and Jung (1989).

21 A full suite in this tradition is similar to the structure of the second group of *shu'be* in the *Shash Maqām*.

formula (tala) of the pieces are discussed by musicians in Indian theoretical terms, but they include examples of the *aqsaq* (additive or 'limping') rhythms typical of other Central Asian traditions.[22] This repertoire alerts us to the many musical and poetic links between Sufism and the *maqām* traditions across Central Asia.[23]

Uyghur Regional Traditions

In the traditions discussed above, we find textual evidence of the repertoires going back around 200 years. In the case of the various *muqam* traditions found among the Uyghurs I have to date found rather few sources documenting their recent history, in contrast to the bulk of scholarship which has been devoted to speculation on the deep historical roots of the *On Ikki Muqam*. There are, however, a number of fairly reliable musicological transcriptions and analyses of the Uyghur *muqam* traditions. The *Turpan Muqam* suites comprise six sections in contrasting rhythms, beginning with an unmetered solo sung *ghazal* (equivalent to the *muqäddimä* of the *On Ikki Muqam*), and moving through a fixed progression of pieces based on contrasting duple and 'limping' drum patterns, usually incorporating the popular local dance piece *Nazirkom*. Each *muqam* generally corresponds to one mode. Unlike the *On Ikki Muqam* the *Turpan Muqam* have no instrumental sections, but there is much to link these two traditions in their overall form and even specific melodies. Like the *On Ikki Muqam* they consist of sung poetry in the *ghazal* form attributed to major poets including Navā'ī, and folk *beyit* or couplets. As with more traditional performances of the *On Ikki Muqam*, they are accompanied primarily on the long-necked bowed *satar* and *dap* frame drum. They can also be performed in purely instrumental form with even more complex rhythmic variations on the *naghra-sun ay* (kettle drums and shawm).

The *Dolan Muqam* are performed by musicians living in the Dolan villages of Mäkit, Maralbeshi, and Awat counties.[24] The names of these nine suites include a few names also found in the *On Ikki Muqam*: *rak* for instance, but the term for these suites employed by local musicians is often not '*muqam*' but '*bayawan*' (desert), thus *Sim Bayawan*, *Bom Bayawan*, *Khodäk Bayawan Muqam*. Unlike the full performance time of two hours for a full suite in the *On Ikki Muqam*, each Dolan suite lasts only around six minutes, and consists of four sections in fixed rhythmic patterns. The instruments used are unique to the Dolan: the Dolan *ghijäk* spike fiddle; the Dolan *rawap* plucked lute, and the *qalon* zither.[25] This ensemble is reminiscent of the Kashmiri tradition, but the Dolan accompany their *muqam* with several large *dap*

22 *chapāndaz* and *setāla* (Pacholczyk, 1996: 64).

23 Djumaev describes a historical process throughout the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, of the melding of ritual practices and musical genres, whereby sama rituals assumed new forms, and *maqām* traditions became part of sama rituals (Djumaev, 2002: 937).

24 The Dolan people are generally regarded as an ethnic subgroup of the Uyghurs. See Svanberg (1996) for a detailed consideration of debates concerning their ethnicity. See also Newby in this volume.

25 See Trébinjac (2000: 203–6) for a full description of these instruments.

frame drums instead of the *dokra*. Also unique to the Dolan is the way in which these three instruments provide a type of counterpoint to the sung melodies.

Figure 4.4 Dolan drummers at a *mäshräp* near Mäkit

Although the musical suites today termed *Qumul Muqam* bear the same names as some of the *On Ikki Muqam*, musically – that is in terms of melody, mode and structure – there is nothing to link these two traditions. Basically, the *Qumul Muqam* comprise an unmetered opening *muqäddimä* followed by a suite of local folk songs without any consistent modal profile or order of rhythmic patterns. Local scholars report that only in this generation of musicians has the use of these formal Arabic or Persian names become current, and musicians still refer to both popular and formal names. Thus, *Därdilawa* is also now known as *Özhal Muqam*; *Chong Därdi Yaman* has been renamed *Iraq Muqam*. Äsäd Mukhtar, a retired school teacher, is the most respected performer of the tradition. He suggests that the *muqäddimä*, with its lyrics attributed to the major Chagatay poets, and greater religious content, was grafted onto the suites of folk songs in order to please the mullas, so that the people could carry on singing their love songs (interview June 2001).

It is in this easternmost end of the *maqām* traditions that we find a rare hint of musical influence coming from the Han Chinese sphere into the Central Asian. In terms of mode the music of Qumul is more purely pentatonic than the traditions further to the west. This is not in itself sufficient evidence (as is sometimes argued) of closer links to Han Chinese music; this kind of pentatonic scale is very widespread

and might equally be seen as a testament to closer links to the northern nomadic peoples – the pre-Islamic old Uyghur heritage – and weaker influence of the court musics of Central Asia and their more complex modal profiles. It is in one hybrid instrument, the Qumul *ghijäk*, that we find a fascinating testament to the processes of cultural mixing and creativity along this section of the eastern Silk Road. The instrument is a cross between the Chinese *erhu* (two-stringed fiddle) and the type of *ghijäk* now found only among the Dolan in southern Xinjiang. In construction the Qumul *ghijäk* resembles the *erhu*. Its two bowed strings are tuned a fifth apart, and the bow sits between the two strings, like the *erhu*. Unlike the *erhu* the Qumul *ghijäk* has six to eight sympathetic strings. I would suggest that the instrument is a comparatively recent hybrid, perhaps dating back to the nineteenth century when greater numbers of Han Chinese, including travelling opera troupes, arrived in Qumul (cf. Harris, 2004: 71–6). At the conference 'Situating the Uyghurs', Äsäd Sulayman countered this suggestion with a common *aperçu* among Uyghurs that the *erhu* originally came to China from Central Asia. This is, of course, widely accepted historical fact: the 'hu' of *erhu* refers to the 'barbarian' origin of the instrument. This argument, widely accepted within Xinjiang, neatly enables Uyghur nationalists to continue to claim the Qumul *ghijäk* as an 'ancient Uyghur instrument' and avoid any suggestion of Chinese influence on their musical traditions.

I have already commented briefly on the musical correspondences, or the lack of them between these regional traditions. The '*Qumul Muqam*' is clearly a recent coinage applied to suites of local folk songs and as such is structurally unrelated, but there is some musicological evidence linking the other three *muqam* traditions. Zhou Ji, who has played a prominent role in government sponsored projects to transcribe all of these traditions, has compared the modes and structures of the *On Ikki*, *Dolan* and *Turpan Muqam* traditions (Zhou, 2001). Significantly, and providing musical evidence for testimonies claiming that the combination of the three sections of the *On Ikki Muqam* is a recent phenomenon, Zhou only finds correspondences between the *chong näghmä* section of the *On Ikki Muqam* and the other traditions – that is the section which Wan Tongshu argues was originally performed by court musicians in Qäshqär. Even so, Zhou's detailed comparison makes clear that there is no straightforward correspondence between these traditions.

Each suite begins with an unmetered solo section, although this is very brief in the *Dolan Muqam*. Only the *On Ikki Muqam* follow most of the sung sections with related instrumental *märghul* sections. The *Dolan Muqam* have fewer sections and their performance time is considerably shorter. Pieces with similar, but not identical, rhythmic patterns occur at the same point in the suites, but the pieces' names differ. Certain named pieces, notably *jula* and *sänäm*, correspond rather closely. In fact these are popular independent pieces which crop up in folk traditions as well as *muqam* across the Uyghur repertoire, demonstrating again that the *muqam* traditions cannot be separated from the wider musical context.

Nonetheless I think that such comparison does make a case for a relationship between these three traditions, most strongly between the *On Ikki Muqam* and *Turpan Muqam*. I have little historical information on relations between courts, or movement of itinerant musicians between these two regions, and so can only surmise a possible transmission of musical repertoire as has been documented in the case of

the Bukharan *Shash Maqām*.[26] Zhou Ji suggests, echoing Abdurehim Ötkur, that the Dolan is a kind of precursor of the *On Ikki Muqam*, a more 'primitive' folk version out of which Amannisa Khan et al. fashioned a more refined finished product. I am not personally convinced by this theory, which Zhou Ji does not back up with convincing historical evidence, merely suggesting (controversially) that Amannisa Khan was born in the Yäkän [Yarkand] region and so was probably herself a Dolan (Zhou, 2001).

If we make a detailed comparison of the structure of the *Shash Maqām* with these three Uyghur traditions, it is quickly apparent that there is even less by way of specific correspondence between names, patterns and overall progression of the suite. Instead of the unmetered sung opening, the *Shash Maqām* begin with a succession of instrumental pieces before moving into a progression of sung pieces, divided into two sets of *shu'be*.[27] All the traditions alternate between duple rhythms and the *aqsaq* 'limping' rhythms which have been linked to Sufi *zikr* rituals and esoteric breathing practices (During, 1998) but the specific names and rhythms vary.

In terms of mode there is further divergence. The first and most popular mode (corresponding to the Western C major scale), *Rak Muqam* in the Uyghur traditions and *Rast Maqam* in the *Shash Maqām*, is the same in all the traditions. Beyond this we find *muqam* with different names sharing similar modes, and *muqam* with the same name but modally somewhat different (cf. Zhou, 2001: 40). As Muhämmät Imin argues, it seems likely that as they spread across the region the prestigious Arabic terms have been applied to pre-existing musical traditions and have not necessarily carried with them their modal meaning. Unlike Muhämmät Imin, however, I would argue that the terms have not been applied to unchanging musical fossils but to living, fluid and constantly changing traditions.

Not Pieces but Processes

This kind of comparative analysis of pieces is a useful starting point, but it cannot tell a complete story. The whole thrust of the discipline of ethnomusicology over the last few decades has been to move away from such decontextualized analysis and comparison of musical products (the *Vergleichende Musikwissenshaft* of the early twentieth century) and focus instead on the processes through which they are conceived, maintained and interpreted in society (Feld, 1984; Rice, 1994). This aspect of enquiry has been rather thoroughly ignored in studies of *maqām/muqam* on either side of the border to date. Do the folk sayings about *muqam* found among the Uyghurs – '*uning muqami yoq*!'('he has no *muqam*', ie. no morals) – for instance, find echoes amongst the Uzbeks? Are patterns of patronage, transmission, musicians' status, beliefs, ritual and other contexts shared? To begin to answer some of these questions I turn to Uyghur musicians' oral testimonies.

26 Laura Newby's discussion in this volume of population movement from Altä Shähär to the Turpan region under the Qing could provide a clue to possible routes of transmission.

27 Angelika Jung (1989: 207) suggests that here too the structure has changed and developed over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As is the case in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the Uyghur *muqam* traditions (with the exception of the *Dolan Muqam*) are tied to the courts of the local kings, who also commonly patronized the Sufi orders. This is not to say that the repertoires are separate from the local folk traditions. The court musicians of a hundred years ago were not necessarily full-time professionals but were often peasant farmers as well as musicians, summoned to court when the king required entertainment. Among the Uyghurs, as in Uzbekistan, *muqam* performance formed an important part of wedding celebrations during most of the twentieth century, although in both regions it has been supplanted in recent decades by pop music. The suite cycle known today as the *Turpan Muqam* is linked to the court of the Lukchun Wangliri.[28] Äziz Niyaz recounts his genealogy thus: the first generation, Janan Häsän Bala and Janan Aladdin, were kept by the king at court, but also played in the villages. The second generation, Nämät Balangzi, and Abdul Bala, performed *Muqam* in the villages between the fall of the Lukchun Wangliri and 'liberation' in 1949.

Figure 4.5 Dancing at a *mäshräp* near Turpan

The third generation, Sherip Sawut and Ismayil Simazin, were unable to perform between the late 1950s and late 1970s due to the extremist political climate, but they revived the tradition in the 1980s with official support. Äziz Niyaz and Tursun

28 The hereditary rulers of the Turpan-Qumul region, who ruled as clients of the Qing administration. They hosted the German scholar Albert von Le Coq in 1905 (Le Coq, 1929).

Ismayil, now the fourth generation, have brought the tradition into the twenty-first century, participating in local government sponsored recording and transcription projects, VCD and CD releases, and a UK tour.[29]

In Qumul, Äsäd Mukhtar recounted that his great uncle and grandfather were performers and teachers, and his uncle was a singer and *dap* frame drum player. His father was an *akhun*, a religious leader in the village, so it was not appropriate for him to sing but he loved the *muqam* and was knowledgeable, even correcting musicians' performances. Äsäd studied with Akhun Beg who played *ghijäk* fiddle, and Aq Pashsha, a great singer. These two were officially appointed musicians to the Qumul court in the 1940s. They were not resident in the court but worked as peasant farmers, and were summoned to play at special occasions. The court also kept a music official who would call up the musicians to inspect their performance. Good players would be rewarded with a bolt of cloth; poor performance would be punished, even beaten on the soles of the feet (interview June 2001).

It is in accounts such as this that we find the clearest indication of a set of shared Central Asian attitudes and assumptions about music. Compare these anecdotes concerning the *Khorezm Maqām* retold by Jean During: the second Emir Mohammed Rahim Khan who ruled Khorezm from 1864 to 1910 was a poet and music lover. This Emir issued a decree, 'The *maqām* of Khorezm are the inalienable property of the people. Any who contest this decree, who belittle the *maqām* or perform them incorrectly will be severely punished.' He ordered the *maqām* transcribed in 1883 – the earliest in Central Asia – using a form of notation thought to be his own invention based on the fret board of the *tanbur*. Local musicians were brought to court, and tested on their knowledge of the *maqām*. They were beaten if they made mistakes, and rewarded if they played well (During, 1998: 43). Such stories are still told today in Khorezm with pride, and they make a striking parallel with accounts from Qumul far to the east.[30]

Mäshräp

Detailed descriptions of performance contexts may reveal underlying correspondences, but they also demonstrate the diversity of local practices. Take the variety of social contexts and meanings subsumed under the rubric of *mäshräp* among the Uyghurs.[31] Among Uyghur men from the Ili valley the monthly gatherings have been the expression of lasting social bonds between a group of men of similar age, often termed the *ottuz oghul* (thirty sons). The prominent musician Gheyazdin Barat described for me the *mäshräp* in Ghulja during the 1940s, with their structure

29 Their recordings are available on: *Music from the Oasis Towns of Central Asia. Uyghur Musicians of Xinjiang* (London: Globestyle, 2000).

30 A similar account can be found in a 1924 article written by a Uyghur reformer based in Soviet Yäkän (Panfilov). Palace musicians kept by the Ili Sultan in the late nineteenth century were punished if they forgot part of a *muqam* or its lyrics. The writer suggests that this demonstrates the Sultan's love of 'national music' (Ghapparov, 1924).

31 For a Uyghur-language general introduction to *mäshräp* see Raxman, Hämdulla and Khushtar (1996).

of musical performance, reading of religious texts, and informal court hearings held for wrong-doers.[32] Sean Roberts has written about the new religious and nationalist meanings which Uyghur reformers invested in the Ili *mäshräp* in the 1990s, in an attempt to counter youth alcoholism, drug abuse and crime (Roberts, 1998). In 2001, in Bishkek I attended a *mäshräp* held by a group of migrants who had come here from Ghulja in the early 1960s. Here the *mäshräp* was clearly a major force in retaining the Uyghur identity and culture in the diaspora.

This group of *ottuz oghul* claimed proudly that they had held their *mäshräp* for 40 years. They maintained the traditional rules, presided over by the *yigit beshi* (leader of the lads) and *qazi* (judge), and administered punishments such as the *surutini tamghur tartish* ('shadow on the wall': water is thrown over the guilty party). The *yigit beshi* and *qazi* were also the leading musicians in the group, and made a fair stab at the 'Ili variant' of the *On Ikki Muqam* on violin and *dutar*. The wives and children laboured over the immense meal inside the house and appeared only to serve the food, but feminine representations were not absent from the performance: one of the *ottuz oghul* gave a spirited demonstration of a coqettish dance complete with tea bowl balanced on the head.

In a Dolan village near Mäkit I attended a *mäshräp* where the musicians played the role of clowns at the same time as they meted out justice. Real or pretend lapses in morality were punished by ritual humiliation for the delight of the large mixed crowd. Here too I found gender reversal for comic effect: one man was 'fined' for flirting by being 'married to two wives' in the form of two mincing musicians in women's head scarves who lay on each side of him on a makeshift bed in the middle of the dance arena and took turns to smack his face. The gathering culminated with the distinctive Dolan dance in which large numbers of men and women participated, leading into a competitive whirling circle dance from which dancers gradually dropped out, tired or dizzy, until one winner was left in the arena performing high victory leaps. The length of the *Dolan Muqam* with its changing rhythms progressing towards a fast climax could be exactly tailored to the needs of this dance.[33]

'*Maqām*-ization'

A feature which links the Central Asian *maqām* traditions at the same time as it seeks to divide them, is their enshrinement as national or sometimes as local symbols, and the strenuous efforts, which are in most cases ongoing, to fix and codify them. Such processes of canonization worldwide are commonly linked to nationalism, and in the Central Asian context are more usually thought of as products of Soviet or Chinese cultural and nationalities policies. A few existing studies of the Central Asian *maqām* repertoires, however, give us a sense of their historical depth. During (1993) discusses the canonization of the *Shash Maqām* in the eighteenth century. Already in this period, he argues, the suites served as a political symbol, but one which predates nationalism and which relates instead to the power of the city-state, in this case the

32 Interview, Ürümchi, 1999. For further details see liner notes in the CD *Music from the Oasis Towns of Central Asia. Uyghur Musicians of Xinjiang* (London: Globestyle, 2000).

33 See also Sabine Trébinjac's detailed descriptions of Dolan *mäshräp* (2000).

emirate of Bukhara. It was this repertoire that the Soviet musicologist Yunus Rajabi transcribed and revised in the late 1920s, selecting what he considered to be the 'most authentic' of numerous renditions, even synthesizing his own versions from parts of different versions. Rajabi's *Shash Maqām* transcriptions formed the basis of teaching in the Uzbek conservatory in subsequent decades, preserved into the post-Soviet era and enshrined as an Uzbek national tradition (Levin, 1996: 47–51). Under the PRC, as Light describes in this volume, early efforts to document and preserve the *On Ikki Muqam* in the 1950s have been revived with great vigour since the 1980s with the establishment of the *Muqam* Research Committee and *Muqam* Ensemble, and their copious recording, publication and performance work.

Maqām have equally been invoked in the pursuit of regional identities. During has coined the term 'maqamization' to describe such processes in contemporary Tajikistan. Following independence, regional power struggles in Tajikistan were mirrored by moves to demote the *Shash Maqām* from its position as national tradition. These suites were seen as too closely tied to the former power base in the north of the country, and as belonging less to Tajik than to Jewish performers. In their place the song repertoire of the southern mountain regions was privileged. But this repertoire, however purely Tajik, was seen by many as insufficiently sophisticated to serve as a national tradition, and so musicians sought to 'maqamize' the repertoire, attaching modal structures from the *Shash Maqām* and ordering the songs into suites named *Nawa Maqām*, etc. (During, 1993: 39). An equivalent '*muqam*-ization' has been enthusiastically exercised on Uyghur regional traditions. The 1990s saw a rash of recordings and transcriptions, of the *Uyghur Dolan Muqam* (Ayup, 1996), the *Classical Uyghur Turpan Muqam* (Sabit and Ao, 1999), the *Qumul Muqam* (Isma'il, 1991), even the *Ili On Ikki Muqam* (Barat and Osman, 1995). These projects were supported by the relevant local government bodies, and were clearly promoted as symbols of local pride, in competition with the dominant Qäshqär-Yäkän *On Ikki Muqam* tradition.

Conclusion

I began this chapter by situating the Uyghur *muqam* traditions in the broad context of *maqām* traditions across the Islamic world. I have argued that the Uyghur *muqam* traditions are clearly a part of the Central Asian musical world, and owe so little to Chinese influence that the one instance of east–west borrowing (the Qumul *ghijäk*) is striking because it is so rare. Through a more detailed comparison of the musical aspects of contemporary Central Asian *maqām* repertoires, I have argued that most of these repertoires share common organizational and conceptual features, but some (again notably the *Qumul Muqam*) have simply adopted the term *muqam* for their local folk song suites. There are closer musical correspondences, and indeed closer historical relationships, respectively between the three Tajik–Uzbek traditions (*Shash Maqām*, *Khorezm Maqām*, *Ferghana Maqām*), and between the remaining three Uyghur traditions (On *Ikki Muqam*, Turpan *Muqam*, *Dolan Muqam*).

Regarding the vexed debate on how to situate the *On Ikki Muqam* between the Arab world and the Western Regions, I have argued that the various Central Asian

maqām traditions are primarily local, oral traditions, and as such the search for historically and geographically distant roots is essentially tilting at windmills. Claims of long continuity with the music of the Western Regions lack firm musicological or historical evidence. While Arabic *maqām* terminology has been applied to Central Asian repertoires the terms have not necessarily carried with them their modal meanings. As we can see with the case of the *Qumul Muqam*, this process of grafting Arabic terminology onto local repertoires is ongoing. I have argued that instead the Central Asian *maqām* may be seen as simply the most prestigious examples of a widespread habit of Central Asian musicians, that of drawing musical pieces together into suites. Moreover, these suites were never intended to be performed from start to finish, but rather served as a repository, a way of organizing the repertoire.

I have suggested that the comparative enterprise is problematic since these musical traditions are not fixed and unchanging, and because comparison of formal musical aspects alone does not take into account the differing meanings and functions of the music in different contexts. To this end I have given some examples of continuities in the way that musicians relate to *maqām* traditions in different parts of Central Asia, and I have shown the variety of contexts and meanings which are enacted by a single performance tradition, the Uyghur *mäshräp*. Because music is itself wordless, it is most susceptible to the imposition of meanings, and because the *maqām* traditions have connotated prestige the layers of meaning attached to them are particularly rich. A look at the *mäshräp* enables us to see beyond the national and scholarly debates surrounding the *maqām* to the local variety of practices and understandings which lie beneath.

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Chapter 5

Uyghur Literary Representations of Xinjiang Realities[1]

Michael Friederich

It goes without saying that there is not one single reality of life for all Uyghurs, and that Uyghur representations of Xinjiang realities depend on various factors: social background, education, religious orientation, gender, place and circumstances of living, and of course, the means chosen for expression. Literature is one way of presenting reality. How reality is perceived and presented is up to the writer, who may choose different point of views and different modes of expression.

In this chapter, I deal with poetry. I will 1) show how Uyghur poets deal with Uyghur life in Xinjiang in their literary work; 2) investigate poetical means and content, and the relation between them; and 3) try to place Uyghur literature and culture in a broader context between East and West. There are several reasons why I have chosen poetry, and not another literary genre like the novel or drama, to examine my subject:

- poetry is the literary genre with the longest and richest tradition among the Uyghurs, and for this reason it offers great variety in terms of form and content;
- poetry is produced by a large number of amateur, semi-professional and professional Uyghur writers;
- poetry is esteemed by a big readership, and is especially popular among rural Uyghurs (still the majority of the Uyghur population);
- poetry is supposed to express feelings and perceptions, but also makes statements in a very condensed way; it is commonly thought to reflect the poet's personal and subjective self;
- the importance of poetry is recognized not only by Uyghur readers but also by the state leadership, therefore the government pays special attention to poetry and poets. This attention has varied over time, ranging from pressure and

1 This chapter arises from a long-standing involvement with Xinjiang and Uyghurs in general, and Uyghur literature in particular. My first visit to Xinjiang dates back to 1986. From 1987 to 1989 I studied Uyghur language and literature at Xinjiang University, and during the 1990s I continued to visit Xinjiang. This preoccupation has led to several academic publications on modern Uyghur literature and language (Friederich, 1994, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2001, 2002). Many of the points raised in this chapter are based on personal observations and discussions with Uyghur writers and literature aficionados.

interference to tutelage and observance to *laissez faire*.[2] State attention leads to varying reactions on the part of the poets.

I will concentrate on the recent past in my choice of examples. Unless explicitly mentioned, all of the poems I quote were written and published in the years between the late 1980s and the end of the twentieth century.[3]

The first example is by a poet called Ablimit Sämät, who composed these verses about his native village Aqsaray near Khotän in south-west Xinjiang, one of the least developed parts of the Autonomous Region. Ablimit Sämät is not mentioned in standard reference works on modern Uyghur literature, and my Uyghur friends and acquaintances have not heard of him. He is one of the many 'nameless' amateur poets whose works are regularly published in Uyghur literary journals. The poem reads:

Äjäblänmäng, bardim desäm Aqsaraygha,
Bardim, biraq barghinim yoq yiraq jaygha.
[...]
Zuntung ämäs, dehqan uning khojayini,
Altun yighar altun chechip topa-laygha.
[...]
Asfalit yoli girä saptu yeshilliqqa,
Kheli köp miniwaptu polat taygha.
Qaraydikän häwäslinip tal-teräklär
Tonush dehqan häydäp ötkän bolkiwaygha.
[...]
Qandaq demäng, här kishining oy-khiyali
Yötkiliptu 'Amal qilip bay bolay'gha (Sämät, 1998)

Don't be surprised if I tell you I went to Aqsaray [lit. "White House"],
I went there, but the place I went to is not remote.
[...]
No president but the farmer rules there,
Gold he piles up, and gold he sows on the fields.
[...]
The asphalt road winds into the green,
Many there are riding steel foals.
Willows and poplars watch enthusiastically
As farmers they know pass by driving minivans.
[...]
Don't question if that might be, all the thinking, all the striving
Is now to find ways to get rich.

2 For a detailed account of this point see Friederich (1994, 1997).

3 I have to apologize that my English translations of the poems lack poetical form and spirit; they merely serve to transmit the content.

The second example is located in a setting geographically close to Ablimit Sämät's Aqsaray. Written by Adil Tuniyaz,[4] a young poet born in Qaghiliq, a town half-way between Khotän and Qäshqär, the poem depicts the scenery of a firewood market in the following way:

[...]
Äzan awazi
Lay tamlarning käynidä
Asta-asta nurlinip,
Aylanmaqta sähärgä.
[...]
Döwä-döwä
Qädimiy toghraq wä
Yulghun yiltizliri
Okhshar mundaq räsimgä:
Orda kharabisi,
Bir sän'ät muzey.
Yaghach pütük.
Qizghuch komzäk kötärgän yalingach ot ilahi.
Chastani Ilig Begdin qorqup kätkän jinlar.
Qan yuqi ustikhan, süzük qashteshi.
Münggüzini dinggaytip bughilar yatqan.
[...]
Salwa tälpäk kiygän adämlär,
Diwidäk egiz kälgän adämlär
Traktordin tashlaydu otun (Tuniyaz 1996).
[...]
The call to prayer
Behind the clay walls
Is slowly clearing
And turning into the morning dawn.
[...]
Heaps of
Ancient two-folded poplars and
Tamarisk roots
Appear to be:
A palace in ruins,
An art gallery,
Writing on wood.
A God of fire, naked, carrying a reddish amphora.

4 Adil Tuniyaz was born in October 1970, the son of a school-teacher. Adil attended school in his home town of Qaghiliq, and in 1988 he started to study at the Faculty of Literature at Xinjiang University. Since graduating in 1993 he has worked at the Xinjiang Radio Station in Ürümchi. He published his first poem in 1983. Since 1992 several of his poems have won literary awards (Abdurehim, 1998: 65/66, 531, 541). A collection of his poems was published in 1998 by the Nationalities Press in Beijing (Tuniyaz, 1998).

Spirits that fear Chastani Ilig Beg.[5]
Bones with stains of blood, translucent jade
Deer, lying on the ground, raising aloft their antlers.
[...]
Men wearing furry fringed hats,[6]
Men tall as giants,
Throw down wood from the tractor.

These two poems have two things in common. The first and most significant is that both of them deal with a reality experienced by most Uyghurs, that of rural life. A large majority of Uyghurs in Xinjiang still live in villages and rural areas, outside urban centres. Therefore, it is not surprising, that the village and village-life is a predominant subject of Uyghur literature in general and poetry in particular.

The second area of common ground is less obvious since it concerns something not explicitly mentioned in either of the two poems: the nationality of the people depicted. It might seem artificial to draw conclusions from an item not named, especially since every Uyghur reader knows that the overwhelming majority – about 90 per cent – of the population of the Qäshqär-Yäkän-Khotän area are Uyghurs, and that Han Chinese or members of other nationalities are very unlikely to wear the *salwa tälpäk* headgear described in the poem. Nevertheless, this omission of nationality is interesting, especially since nationality, national traditions and national feelings play a central role in Xinjiang, not only with respect to political life, but permeating the reality of daily life.

Nationality in Uyghur Poetry

Despite the reiterated official assertion that Xinjiang is a multi-ethnic region (*köp millätlik rayon*) it is difficult to find Uyghur poems depicting people other than Uyghurs. Most Uyghur poets write solely about Uyghur people. This observation is true not only for Uyghur poets and poetry, but also for Uyghur literature in general, Uyghur films,[7] and Uyghur music videos, where the images, whether they depict people, objects or scenery, are almost exclusively Uyghur. It is common for (and required of) professional Uyghur writers to spend a certain period each year 'among the ordinary people'. Most Uyghur writers choose to stay in villages in Xinjiang to 'study' the life of Uyghur peasants. I am not aware of Uyghur writers and/or poets who take this time to investigate factory life. One explanation for this might be the fact that the workforce in big factories or the oil business is mainly Han

5 Chastani Ilig Beg is the mythical hero of a didactic epic bearing his name as title. The epic is generally thought to have originated in the era of the Kök-Türk kingdom (ad 552–744); Uyghurs regard the Kök-Türk as their direct ancestors. This view is also put forward in Uyghur schoolbooks. For a rather personal account of Chastani Ilig Beg in modern Uyghur literature, cf. Dawut (1998).

6 A short description of the 'furry fringed hat' (*salwa tälpäk*), commonly worn by Uyghur peasants, is given in Rakhman et al. (1996: 21).

7 On this topic, cf. Zaman (1996).

Chinese. Only a few Uyghur writers visit central China[8] during this 'professional literary fieldwork', where they preoccupy themselves with the life of Uyghurs living in China's big cities.

This observation also seems to be true for other nationalities in Xinjiang: as far as I can judge from the published literatures of other Turkic and/or Islamic peoples of Xinjiang, namely Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Tajik, writers of these nationalities deal almost exclusively with the life of their own people.[9] Han Chinese writers writing about the so-called 'minority nationalities' in Xinjiang and having their work translated into Uyghur are also very rare.[10] This 'single-nationality-mindedness' demonstrates all too clearly the lack of effectiveness of the long-standing government policies promoting the 'friendship of the peoples' (*millätlär dostliqi*).[11]

It seems that for Uyghur authors to write about people and nationalities other than Uyghur either a special occasion or pressure by the hand of the government is required. Such occasions might be the visit of a Uyghur poet to a predominantly non-Uyghur area, whether in Xinjiang or in central China,[12] or an anniversary of, for example, the thirtieth year of the foundation of the Kizilsu Kyrgyz Autonomous District (*Qizilsu Qirghiz aptunum oblasti*) in 1984[13] or the celebration of the return

8 *Kuli* in colloquial Uyghur, from Chinese, literally 'within the mouth' (Ch. *kouli*) of the Gansu corridor.

9 The case of the Tajik is rather complex: since in China Tajik is not a written language, Tajiks use Uyghur for writing. So even if the language of Tajik poets and writers is Uyghur, the subject of their work is Tajik life. There is only one public sphere where the Tajik language is used and appreciated outside an exclusively Tajik surroundings, and that is music: Several Tajik singers singing in the local Sariqoli-Tajik language have gained popularity among Uyghurs.

10 One example is the well-known Han Chinese writer and former Minister of Culture of the PRC, Wang Meng. After being labelled a 'rightist' in 1957 he was exiled to Xinjiang where he stayed for seven years among Uyghur peasants in the Ili region in northern Xinjiang. He wrote several short stories on his experiences there (Wang, 1989). For Han Chinese intellectuals living in Xinjiang this was quite exceptional. Wang not only presented Uyghur rural life in a very sympathetic way but wrote the draft version of the stories in Uyghur himself. Wang Meng was officially rehabilitated in 1979. In contrast to literature, many television programmes, films and music videos produced for Han consumption do feature Uyghurs as an exotic and colourful backdrop (I am grateful to Rachel Harris for this information).

11 This statement is to a large extent also true for the Soviet Union, at least since the late 1930s when the 'friendship of the peoples' was officially inaugurated and promoted. Nevertheless, until the October Revolution and well into the late 1920s at least Volga-Tatar writers included depictions of the life of non-Tatar people into their poems, short-stories, and literary reportage. In the pre-1917 period these works were mainly published in the newspaper *Vaqit* and the journal *Shura*, e.g. Shäräf (1910). One example from the early Soviet period is the novel *Pamirdan radio* (Radio from the Pamir), written by Shamil Usmanov (1898–1937) in 1925. See also Usmanov (1989).

12 See for example Arslan (1992) and its review article Ämät (1992); Jilan (1998); Pazil (1998).

13 Tömür Dawamät, for many years 'first man' of the XUAR, composed three poems on this occasion (Dawamät, 1992: 83–6).

of Hong Kong to the Chinese motherland in 1997.[14] Sometimes these two factors coincide.[15]

Heavy pressure to praise the friendship of the peoples in general, and the Han Chinese 'elder brothers' in particular, was applied to Uyghur and other 'minority' writers during the 'Great Leap Forward' at the end of the 1950s and the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s.[16] In the face of the reasons for their composition it is not surprising that most, if not all, of these poems bear a heavy ideological imprint. Following the title of the well-known monograph on Ottoman poetry by Walter Andrews (Andrews, 1985) these poems could be summarized under the heading 'Poet's Voice – Party's Song'.[17]

Nationality can hardly be separated from history. Cultural traditions and national values are important if not crucial aspects of history. Since the beginning of the 1990s the Chinese leadership has tolerated and encouraged the recollection of traditions and values.[18] But, although never explicitly stated, these were to be understood solely as Han-Chinese, or, at least, pan-Chinese traditions and values. In this regard the depiction of Uyghur and Xinjiang history[19] quite often resembles a high wire act. The treatment of history might serve as one parameter to deal with Uyghur poetry and its presentation of Xinjiang's Uyghur present.[20] In recent years, as the political situation in Xinjiang has worsened, many Uyghurs have come to regard the increasing Han Chinese nationalism and chauvinism as a more

14 On this occasion *Tarim*, the leading Uyghur literary journal, published nine poems and two essays in July 1997, written by officially well-appreciated, mostly elderly Uyghur authors (Tömür Dawamät being the first in order of publication) (*Tarim* 7, 1997, 4–26).

15 Again, Tömür Dawamät is the best example in this regard: in his capacity as the head of government of the XUAR he travelled widely throughout Xinjiang and composed many poems, including several concerning the non-Uyghur places and people he visited, for example Tashqurghan (Tajik), Kizilsu (Kyrgyz), Karamay (Han Chinese and Uyghur) (Dawamät, 1992: 35–8: 83–6, 106–14, 149–56, 159).

16 I have dealt with this subject in detail in Friederich (1997: 74–7: 107–11).

17 In his monograph entitled *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song* Andrews investigates the relationship between Ottoman divan-poetry and society.

18 Wang Meng, in a talk given at the James A. Baker, III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University, USA, on March 11, 1998 (Wang, 1998) provides a short but striking outline of this tendency (http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~tnchina/commentary/wang0398.html), cf. also Klaschka (2000).

19 Bovingdon (2001) provides a sound analysis of 'the history of the history of Xinjiang'.

20 There is no doubt that the most successful – successful in the high-wire act as well as in literary skill – Uyghur writer in the field of historical literature is Abdurehim Ötkür (1923–1995). In 1986, 1989 and 1994 he published two famous novels, entitled *Iz* and *Oyghanghan Zemin*, on early 20th century Uyghur history, which were the subject of official debate. It is difficult to judge what in the end saved Abdurehim and his novels from condemnation – the fact that he was a renowned, senior literary personality, or the support of the Uyghur reading 'masses', or most probably a combination of both. The debate is not limited to the Ötkür case. Uyghur history as a subject of literature has been dealt with many times in Uyghur literary discussions, conferences and journals (Tarikhiy, 1988; Jübäyri, 1996; Shüyän, 1996).

dangerous assault on their national identity than socialist ideology was in the past. In contemporary Xinjiang anything Uyghur which is not confined to mere folklore (in the Soviet understanding) is regarded by state authorities with suspicion and is readily condemned as 'nationalism' (*millätchilik*) or 'separatism' (*bölgünchilik*). In this situation, many Uyghurs feel deprived of the right to be proud of their own national history and traditions.

After this somewhat lengthy excursion I will now return to the two poems quoted above and try to 'read' them again. In the poem 'Aqsaray' – I would rather call it a rhymed statement – history is simply omitted, there is no reference to the past at all. The author confines himself with the depiction of a bright present, equipped with hard-working people who 'try to get rich'. Thereby the author remains on the safe side, that is, in accordance with official representations of reality.

In the second poem, 'The Firewood Market', the attitude is completely different. The poet is watching the present, and this present, although it is quite often a rather depressing one, evokes in him images of the bright and long-standing cultural and national traditions of his people. But the poet cannot hide his disappointment. He is disappointed by the fact that his people are ignorant of their past. They are ignorant either because they do not know about it, or because their hard and enduring present reality does not permit them to take into account their past. That is to say: people do not live but survive, throwing firewood – the imaginary past conjured by the poet – from the tractor. And, of course, they are going to burn it.[21]

In contrast to poems of the first kind, this second kind of representation of past and present Uyghur realities is characterized by a strong personal and subjective atmosphere. This can be seen not only from the content of the poem but also from the poetic means. The relationship between these two aspects (content and style/form) can be explained by differing understandings of 1) what literature, and especially poetry, is meant to be, and 2) how the poet understands his role in the creative process, and his function within society. These questions centre upon the position of the individual and the value of subjectivity. The two poems quoted clearly show two opposing attitudes and tendencies.

Those Uyghur poets who confine themselves to the depiction of a bright present, and who do not mention the past, mostly use traditional poetic devices like rhyme and traditional meters (*aruz wäzin* or *barmaq wäzin*) and/or cling to what I would like to call 'canonical poetical vocabulary' (old-fashioned, literary words, expressions and metaphors commonly found in Chaghatay and Turki literature).[22] Moreover, the authors who employ this style of poetry typically avoid individuality and subjectivity. This is not to say that the use of this style *per se* contradicts the

21 This interpretation of the poem is based on my own experience with Uyghur literature; my reading was approved by Uyghur friends.

22 Chagatay is the denomination of the written language (and literature respectively) shared and used by all Turkic peoples in Central Asia well into the second half of the nineteenth century, when it was gradually replaced by Turki: Turkic language variants influenced by the different vernaculars but still to a great extent mutually understandable for Turkic speakers from the Caspian Sea and the Chinese Wall. The variety used in Chinese Central Asia at least into the 1940s was called Eastern Turki.

expression of individuality and subjectivity. Uyghur poets like Abdurehim Ötkür, Teyipjan Eliyev and Abdukerim Khojayev have composed poems which show that this two can go together. But to do so convincingly needs a level of skill not often found in contemporary Uyghur poets.

On the other hand, poets depicting a bleak present and bright past very often use experimental poetical styles (no rhyme scheme, no traditional meter) and are eager to introduce 'strange' vocabulary and metaphorical expressions. Also interesting is that these poets often compose verses about subjects hitherto not considered suitable material for poetry. Adil Tuniyaz's collection entitled *Boytaq sha'irning mäkhpiyiti* (Secret of a Bachelor Poet) (Tuniyaz, 1998), for example, contains several poems dealing with beer ('Piwikhana' [Pub] (17–19), 'Piwä köpüki' [Beer-froth].[23] Within the scope of Uyghur literature this is a novelty.

These authors and their poems claim the right to be individual and subjective.[24] This is not to say that this claim is always put forward in a successful, satisfactory and intelligible way, but it is important to stress that it is not only the content but also form and style which attribute to the sometimes disparaging description of this kind of poetry as 'twilight poetry' (*ghuwa she'irlar*) or 'darkish poetry' (*guŋga she'irlar*) in Uyghur literary debates since the early 1990s.[25] Given the contemporary problems with the treatment of Uyghur culture by the state, it is perhaps not surprising to learn that some of these young poets claim to feel honoured by this official repudiation.[26]

Uyghur Poetry in Comparative Context

What I have tried to show so far are aspects of what one might call the 'emic approach' to Uyghur poetry. That is: reading and analysis of Uyghur poetical representations of Xinjiang realities from within the context of Uyghur culture and tradition. In the following section I will touch on the other side, the 'etic approach'. Like any other culture in this world Uyghur culture does not exist in a vacuum. As a matter of course Uyghur poetry has been and still is influenced by the poetry of other peoples, and to a certain degree it also exerts influence on other poetic traditions.

For many centuries it was largely poetry written in the Persian language which served as a model in form as well as in content for poets of the region. It was only at

23 Äkhmätjan Osman, another young Uyghur poet born in Ürümchi in 1964, has composed poems entitled 'Robinson Krozo' [Robinson Crusoe], 'Tawut lirikisi' [Coffin Lyrics], 'Kishnäydu yüräk' [The Heart is Neighing] (all in Osman, 1992: 7: 44–5, 85), 'Bänggä' [The Passionate [Hashish] Smoker], or 'Shäbnäm sayisi' [The Shadow of the Dew] (Osman, 1996: 8: 21–2).

24 This tendency can be observed not only in Uyghur poetry but also in Uyghur prose; see my discussion of the 1986 novel by Mähämmät Baghrash: *Män ölgän adämning qarchughida qetip qalghan surät* [I am the Left-over Image in the Eyeball of the Dead Man] (Friederich, 1998b).

25 *Ghuwa she'irlär* is discussed in Ähäd' (1992), Islam (1991); Ömär (1991, especially p. 146); Muhämmät (1991); Mäkhsut (1991).

26 As confirmed by many conversations with Uyghurs (writers and non-writers) in Xinjiang.

the beginning of the last century that new influences appeared. They, again, concerned both form and content of the poetry. New and old influences have coexisted and mixed with each other until the present, thereby leading to a great variety of possibilities from which contemporary Uyghur poets can choose to express themselves.

To give an example of the interplay between form and content I would like to quote from the work of the outstanding poet Teyipjan Eliyev.[27] Teyipjan was born in April 1930 in Qorghas, a town west of Ghulja, close to the border of the Soviet Union in that time, contemporary Kazakhstan. In 1948, he went to Ghulja, entered the army of the East Turkestan Republic (known in Chinese discourse as the 'Three Districts Revolution') and worked for the army newspaper *Älgha* (Forward). In 1950, he came to Ürümchi, and until 1958 he worked in various high-ranking positions in the administration of culture. In 1959, he was labelled 'rightist' and sent to work in the countryside. After his rehabilitation he studied at the Central Party School from 1963 to 1965. During the Cultural Revolution he was arrested and deported. He was rehabilitated again in 1973. In 1979, and 1985 he was elected vice-president of the Writers' Union of the PRC. He died on 19 February 1989. He is one of the most famous contemporary Uyghur poets with an oeuvre consisting of more than 1,000 poems (Eliyev, 1993), among them the famous poem 'Ode to the Motherland', composed in 1962.[28] This poem was an integral part of the curriculum of Uyghur literature in schoolbooks until the end of the 1980s, and even in the present many Uyghurs know it by heart:

Anijan, tughqan elim Junggo, uning pärzäntimän,
Rishtigä jismim bilän, ishqim bilän päywändimän.

Qibligahim partiyäm – yolchim mening, rolchim mening,
Toy bilip at salimän u bashlighan här jänggä män.

Shu qizil däwrim-zamanim shäwqitim-shanim mening,
Iptikharim shu zamangha käychimän, sazändimän.

China is my dear mother, the place of my birth, I am her son
To her I am bound with my body and all my love.

My focal point is my party, it is my companion, my leader
Each fight it throws me into is a pleasure for me.

This red epoch of mine is my pride, my glory
I am proud of being a singer and constructor of this time.

27 His work includes some very popular poems which at the time of their publication were disputed for ideological reasons, for example 'Walaqtäkkürowning ölimi' [The Death of Mr. Windbag]; first published in *Shinjang ädäbiyat-sän'iti* 7, 1955: 20–3, 'Tügimäs nakhsha' [Never-ending Song]; first published in *Shinjang ädäbiyat-sän'iti* 1, 1957, 54. Many of his poems have been translated into Chinese (Abdurehim 1998: 130–4; *cf.* also Friederich 1994: 120; 1997: 38–9, 66–8).

28 In the first volume of the collected poems of Teyipjan Eliyev published in Beijing in 1997 this poem appeared in a slightly altered version which is rather less ideological (Eliyev, 1997: 349–52).

Already the Uyghur title of this poem, 'Wätän khäqqidä ghäzäl', explicitly states that the poetic form is traditional, namely the *ghäzäl*. The poem is composed in one of the most common traditional meters of poetry in the Islamic world, the *ramal*, possesses a common rhyme scheme (*aa ba ca*, etc) and uses the kind of 'canonical poetical vocabulary' which I discussed above. What is new in this poem – the praise of the ideological homeland and the subordination of the poet's self under the Communist Party – could in fact be interpreted as a tribute to a new era: substituting the personal, human beloved of the past with the impersonal, ideological beloved of the present. This kind of adaptation proved to be very successful since the neglect of a subjective self is a feature common to the Islamic tradition of poetry and to socialist ideology. To compose such a successful poem according to traditional standards the poet needs good knowledge of traditional poetry. It is safe to assume that Teyipjan acquired this knowledge and skills during the ten years between 1938 and 1948 when he attended both the traditional religious school and the new-style Russian-influenced school in his native place, Qorghas.

Let me now turn to another contemporary poem expressing an outlook very different from Teyipjan Eliyev. The young poet Äkhmätjan Osman was born in 1964 in Ürümchi. In 1982, he received a Chinese scholarship to study in Damascus, Syria, where he studied Arabic literature, and wrote and published poems in Arabic. He gained some reputation in Arab literary circles and was praised by the famous Syrian poet and Nobel Literature Prize nominee Adunis. In 1988, he returned to Xinjiang and published two volumes of poetry in Uyghur (Osman, 1992, 1996) before returning to settle in Syria. In January 2004 he was expelled from Syria, apparently due to Chinese pressure on the Syrian government, in connection with the campaign against 'separatism' and 'terrorism'.[29] In the late 1980s he composed a poem called 'Robinson Crusoe' (Osman, 1992: 7). It reads:

Chiqishim keräk
Wujudidin äks sadaning
Chaqay ämdi barchä äynäkni,
Qaldi u
Körsitälmäy sirimni.
Izdinishim keräk
Män istägän äshu tängrini
Qilishqa säjdä.
Yirtay terämni,
Özäm anga qaldi sighalmay,
Kiyiwalay upuqni.
Ketishim keräk
Su'alimgha solap jahanni.
Shäy'ilärni közitäy ämdi
Guman közidä,
Bu zamanning Robinsonimän,

29 He applied, in Ankara, Turkey, to the United Nations for refugee status ('Uyghur poet expelled by Syria seeks refugee status', *Radio Free Asia* Report 11 February 2004). http://www.rfa.org/english/news/2004/02/11/128020/).

Qurup chiqay
Arilimni
Ikkinchi bir dunya yüzidä.

I have to leave
The echo-existence,
I want to crush all mirrors
They can't show
My secret any more.
I have to search for
This God to whom I will
Prostrate.
I will rip off my skin,
I don't fit in any more,
I am going to dress in the horizon.
I have to leave
To chain the world into my questions.
I will show all things
Through eyes of doubts.
I am the Robinson of this time,
I will build
My island
In another world

It is evident that – within the scope of Uyghur poetry – this poem is new in all respects. It does not adhere to any traditional poetical form: there is no meter, no rhyme, and no 'canonical vocabulary'. But there is something even more confusing for the average Uyghur poetry reader as well as for official, Party-minded literary criticism: the place where the poet locates his self. Whereas Teyipjan Eliyev's self is an indispensable but tiny part of a universal, ideological 'We' which he does not question, Äkhmätjan Osman situates his self (although he questions even this) in the centre and questions or repudiates everything else. This attitude is regarded by the critics of Uyghur culture, official and non-official ones alike, with suspicion.[30] This suspicion is mainly due to the fundamental negation of individualism both by communism on the official side, and by 'traditional' (*än'äniwiy*) Uyghur culture on the non-official side.

The attitude of Äkhmätjan Osman and similar poets[31] is novel in Uyghur poetry. But as soon as an 'etic approach' is applied, it becomes evident that they too can be linked to a line of tradition. Within the literatures of Turkic peoples this tradition

30 For a positive appraisal of Äkhmätjan's poetry, cf. Mäkhsut (1991).

31 These include Polat Hewizulla (1996), born in 1966, who studied literature at Xinjiang University. In the late 1990s he worked as an editor with the literary journal *Tängri tagh*. This journal, founded in 1986, tried, successfully in first years of its publication, to be more progressive and open-minded than the 'official' Uyghur literary journal *Tarim* and promoted young Uyghur writers. Another like-minded poet is Qawul (1996), born in 1962, studied language and literature in Qäshqär; from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s he worked as literary editor with the newspaper *Shinjang nefit geziti* (Xinjiang Oil News).

originates in Tatar poetry. To be more precise, in the strong current of *avant-garde* literary currents like futurism, symbolism, and imaginism, which developed in Tatar poetry (mainly under Russian influence) in the first and second decade of the last century.[32] Although sometimes bitterly contesting and fighting with each other they all shared the opinion that – to put it in a very simplistic way – 'something new' had to take the place of 'the old'. Those familiar with Tatar poetry of this period will immediately recognize the similarities between many of Äkhmätjan Osman's poems and the work of Tatar poets like Säghit Rämiyew, Zäynäp Bäshirowa, Ghadel Qutuy or Qävi Näjmi. To name just two examples: Äkhmätjan's 'Robinson Crusoe' reads like an Uyghur version of Gadel Qutuy's 'Kükne tösäräm – tuy yasïym' [I Will Tear Down the Sky and Celebrate], written in early 1923 (Qutuy, 1923). Äkhmätjan's 'Qädinas' [Old Friend] (Osman, 1992) seems to be an Uyghur variation of Säghit Rämiyew's 'Qabaqta mäkhäbbät' [Love in the Tavern], composed in early 1913 (Rämiyew, 1918: 32–3). The similarity in poetical style and the poet's attitude is striking. They repudiate tradition, let it be language, style or values. And they strongly believe in their own right and power to create a new and better poetry (and, perhaps, world).

Unfortunately, I am not able to give a really satisfying answer to the question of how this similarity came into being. As far as I know, this kind of Tatar poetry was never translated into Uyghur. Nor were and are the original Tatar texts or those of possible other Turkic-language intermediaries like the Kazakh poet Maghjan Jumabayew ever available in Xinjiang. Uyghur friends, writers like Mähämmät Baghrash being among them, I talked to on this subject were not aware of Tatar *avant-garde* literature of the 1920s.[33] Only in the case of Äkhmätjan Osman one might suppose that he got to know *avant-garde* literary currents through his studies of Arabic literature and acquaintance with Arab poets.[34] But there might be one possible explanation of this similarity. Perhaps both Äkhmätjan and his Uyghur poet-colleagues, and the Tatar futurists et al., represent their respective realities in a very similar way because they experienced their realities in similar ways, thereby shaping similar attitudes towards this reality. This, of course, has to be left open to further research.

32 Leading figures of these currents in the 1920s were Ghadel Qutuy (1903–45) and Ghomär Tolımbayskiy (1900–39) in futurism, Taqtash (1901–31) in symbolism, and Qävi Näjmi (1901–57) in imaginism. Although it was only on the early 1920s that these currents were labelled this way, their antecedents can easily be traced back to the pre-October Revolution period (for comprehensive treatment, cf. Baldauf, 1994; Galimullin, 2001). On this poetic *milieu*, cf. Friederich (1998a: 155–6).

33 Since these literary currents were officially condemned in the Soviet Union in the mid-1930s, and many of its leading figures physically eliminated, this lack of knowledge on the Uyghurs' side is not really a surprise.

34 A standard monograph on the popularity and influence of *avant-garde* currents in Arabic poetry is Jayyusi (1977).

West or East?

In the following, last part of my chapter I will put forward some considerations about the place of Xinjiang's Uyghurs[35] between west and east. What I have tried to make clear so far is that contemporary Uyghur poetry is divided into two schools: that strongly influenced by Islamic, mainly Persian literary traditions, as illustrated by Teyipjan Eliyev's poem, and that which bears many similarities to modernist, early twentieth century European literary currents, as illustrated by Äkhmätjan Osman's poem. It is obvious that these two schools are very different in form as well as in content. But despite the very obvious differences both trends have one feature in common: both of them were introduced to Xinjiang's Uyghurs from the western direction.

This western sphere – as seen from the Uyghur perspective – was constituted as an entity, and the prime cultural model for the Uyghurs, with the advent of Islam. And this leaning towards the West proved to be decisive even in modern times when Islamic traditions were disputed and rejected. So what seems to be just a question of geographical position in fact refers to one of the basic foundations of Uyghur life and culture, that is, the historical, cultural and economic orientation of the Uyghur people. Beginning with the conversion to Islam, at the latest in the eleventh century of the Christian era, Uyghurs became part of this West. Traditions of all kind, originating in this western, Islamic sphere, arrived in the region and gradually put down roots. The local Muslim population orientated themselves to the West. This orientation was facilitated and supported by linguistic accessibility. The Islamic peoples of Central Asia spoke related Turkic languages and they used the same written language, Chaghatay (which during the second half of the nineteenth century developed into different but still mutually comprehensive variants of Turki). Since language is one important constituent of culture, the knowledge of Arabic and/or Persian, the two major 'Islamic languages' in the Uyghurs' West, was indispensable for an educated man in East Turkestan, and the knowledge of these languages was fairly common. For many of the people later to be called Uyghurs, the Islamic West was therefore directly accessible not only culturally but also linguistically.

Within this 'West' the sources of influence and inspiration for the Uyghurs changed over the course of time. As I showed with regard to poetry, it was mainly the centres of the 'iranianite world' (cf. Fragner, 1999), like Bukhara and Samarkand, which played major and influential roles in Uyghur culture until the beginning of the twentieth century (Yüsüp, 1992). Afterwards these traditional centres were replaced by the Turkic centres of the Russian Empire and subsequently the Soviet Union, namely Kazan and Tashkent. In the pre-1917 period, that is, before the October Revolution, it was in Kazan and other cities in Inner Russia[36] that the majority of

35 I use 'Xinjiang's Uyghurs' although both terms are partly anachronistic in this context.

36 In the context of the Muslim inhabitants of the Russian Empire 'Inner Russia' refers to the region(s) here 'Muslim' was synonymous with 'Tatar'. This region was much bigger than the administrative unit of what became the Tatar ASSR in 1920. It included also the Crimea, Astrakhan, Samara, Saratov, Penza, Kasimow, Ufa, and Orenburg.

the religious and non-religious books, booklets, pamphlets, newspapers and journals circulating in the Chinese part of Central Asia were issued and printed. Inner Russia was also the place of origin of most of the (Tatar) men and women working as teachers in 'modern-type-schools' (*jädidchi mäktäplär*) which opened up all over East *Turkestan/Xinjiang* beginning in around 1910.[37] During the 1920s Inner Russia lost its importance for Xinjiang and was gradually replaced by the new centre of Soviet Central Asia: Tashkent. Beginning in the early 1930s many Uyghurs from Xinjiang were sent to this city to study. After their return nearly all of them took responsible and high-ranking positions in the administration.[38]

Of course, the replacement of the iranianite world first by Inner Russia and then by Soviet Tashkent was not only a change of location. It rather represented a change in ideology: the Islamic tradition was replaced first by a nationalist and/or supra-national (Turkic) *weltanschauung*, and then by socialist ideology. But I would like to stress that regardless of its outlook it was this westward orientation which played an important role for many aspects of Uyghur life in general, and, without doubt, a crucial one for Uyghur literature in particular. This orientation continued after the foundation of the Peoples' Republic of China in 1949. It was only after the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s that this orientation was brought to a sudden end. For the first time in history East Turkestan, or the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region as it was called now, was physically and culturally cut off from its West and annexed to the Chinese sphere.[39]

This annexation has had three main impacts on Uyghur culture. Firstly, during the so-called Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, this annexation was responsible for the virtual cessation of Uyghur culture. In July 1966 the publication of all Uyghur literary journals was stopped, and pages devoted to Uyghur literature in newspapers were cancelled. 'Revolutionary printers' proclaimed the works of Mao Zedong to be a 'mental nuclear bomb' (*mäniwiy atom bomba*) (*Shinjang geziti*, 8 August 1966). For the following seven years Uyghur literature had no public life. It was only in 1973 that the literary journal *Shinjang ädäbiyat sän'äti* [Xinjiang Literature and Art] was published again (Friederich, 1994: 132–3; Sultan, 1997: 35–7).

Secondly, starting with the reforms of the late 1970s up to the present, this annexation caused Uyghur writers and intellectuals to turn eastward in order to get in touch with the West. Western culture, be it American or European, nowadays enters Xinjiang mainly through the Chinese East and through the Chinese language. This of course makes the access to 'the West' for the majority of Uyghurs much more difficult than it was in the past, thereby enhancing a feeling of cultural isolation. Many Uyghurs, even intellectuals, do not feel familiar enough with Chinese to read and enjoy literature in Chinese, either original Chinese or translations into Chinese.

37 For accounts on this issue from the Tatar side, cf. Khalidi (1989); *Tatarlarning*... (1988); Chanishif (2001).

38 The most comprehensive treatment of this subject is Abdulla (2002). He gives the biographies of thirty-five of these so-called Tashkenters (*Tashkäntchilär*).

39 An outline of the relations between 'the traditions of [Uyghur] national literature' and 'the literature of the peoples' (*millätlär ädäbiyati*) – a rather loaded term for the more common *dunya ädäbiyati* or *jahan ädäbiyati* (world literature) – is given by Ömär (1998).

This being so they have to rely heavily on translations into Uyghur through the intermediary of Chinese if they want to keep in touch with Western literature. Such translations, which are published mainly in the journal *Jahan ädäbiyati* [World Literature] and/or under the rubric '*Dunya ädäbiyatidin*' [From World Literature] in *Tarim*, are appreciated not only by average Uyghur readers. Uyghur prose writers too, such as Mähämmät Baghrash, Pärhat Jilan and Mämtimin Hoshur, have told me that they regard translations of eminent representatives of modern Western literature like Gabriel García Márquez, Franz Kafka or Günther Grass as an important source of inspiration.

With regard to poetry it is difficult to verify this dependency. Even more than their colleagues in prose, Uyghur poets, if they are unable or unwilling to read in Chinese, are left on their own. Modern Western poetry is translated into Uyghur only very rarely, in part due to the fact that poetry is nowadays not a very vibrant literary genre in the Western world. The (imposed) self-reliance of Uyghur poetry can be observed not only in poetry-writing itself but also with regard to knowledge of, and acquaintance with, poetic currents originating in the Western world. To give just one example: whereas Ghabdirakhman Säghdi introduced symbolism to the Tatar readership in a fairly lengthy and comprehensive monograph published in 1932 (Säghdi, 1932), it was (as far as I know) only in 1995 that this current was introduced to Uyghur readers (in a question-answer-style editorial in *Tarim*, dealing almost exclusively with Baudelaire's *The Flowers of Evil*) (Simwolizm... 1995).

The third impact of the annexation of Xinjiang to the Chinese sphere after the early 1960s is that the connection between Xinjiang and its 'traditional West', that is the Islamic world, was seriously hampered and restricted. After a brief relaxation in the second half of the 1980s, from 1990 onward the Chinese leadership has tried to put all contacts between Xinjiang's Muslim population and the Islamic word under strict governmental control. Restrictions and control have become even more severe after September 11, 2001, when the PRC eagerly joined the US-led war on 'global (here Uyghur) terrorism'.

The opening of the borders between the XUAR and ex-Soviet Central Asia, which began in 1990, re-strengthened family ties and economic relations. A lot of material and immaterial goods, such as music, and of course people, began to flow in both directions again. But with regard to Uyghur literature in general and poetry in particular this opening did not, on the Xinjiang Uyghurs' side, lead to a revitalization of former, traditional relations.[40] This lack of rejuvenation in literature can be explained mainly by two reasons. Firstly, the severe economic and societal problems the newly independent Central Asian republics were facing after the dissolution of the Soviet Union choked the formerly vital literary life in this societies, including publishing. Simply put, there is hardly any new Uzbek literature, at least not on public sale, that

40 I can only speculate on the reception of Xinjiang Uyghur literature on the former Soviet side after the opening of the borders. Given the still strong socialist character of Xinjiang Uyghur literature I personally doubt that Uyghurs in Kazakhstan, still less Uzbeks and Kazakhs, are eager to read Uyghur literature from the PRC.

Uyghurs might appreciate and emulate.[41] Secondly, because the Chinese leadership in the beginning of the 1990s was afraid of a wave of nationalism sweeping Xinjiang from post-Soviet Central Asia, it tried its best to curtail cultural relations between the Turkic peoples on both sides of the border. To give just one example: during the 1980s, under the rubric '*Qerindash millätlär ädäbiyatidin*' [Literature(s) of the Brother-Nationalities] the journal *Tarim* published the literary works of many (then still Soviet) Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Tajik writers in Uyghur translation. In the 1990s it appeared less regularly and its content changed. Now the literature of 'brother-nationalities' from within China, whether they are Turkic and/or Muslim nationalities from Xinjiang, or Mongol, Hui, Yi, Zhuang, and so on from other parts of the 'Chinese motherland', makes up the bulk of literary works presented under this rubric.

The early 1960s were a turning point not only in Uyghur literature but in Uyghur life in general. From this time onward, until the present, the Chinese government has pursued a policy of isolating the Uyghurs and changing their traditional westward orientation, with the ultimate aim of incorporating them into a Han-dominated China. It is not 1949 but the early 1960s, in my opinion, which mark the major shift in the history and culture of Xinjiang's Uyghurs and other non-Chinese-speaking 'Muslim minorities' in Xinjiang. The consequences and implications of this shift are far from being thoroughly studied. Doing so will undoubtedly improve and deepen our understanding of Xinjiang's past and present realities.

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41 During my last visit to Tashkent in summer 2004 not one single public book-store remained in this city of more than two million inhabitants. The situation in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan might be better, but Uzbek literature was and still might be especially important for Uyghurs because of the closeness of the two languages and cultures.

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Chapter 6

Hybrid Name Culture in Xinjiang: Problems Surrounding Uyghur Name/Surname Practices and their Reform

Äsäd Sulayman

Introduction

The Uyghurs traditionally used only given names, with the use of surnames or family names remaining uncommon until the middle of the twentieth century. From the 1930s on, some intellectuals and individuals who had visited or been educated in the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union or in Turkey came under the influence of the New Culture Movement. Recognizing the need to utilize a surname alongside their personal name, some adopted Russified surname suffixes, while others adopted the Turkic patronymic form *oghli* or *qizi*. Yet though the Russified surname form gained popularity among some intellectuals in the Ili region during the *Üch wilayät inqilawi* [Three Districts Revolution, 1944–49], it failed to become the alternative for the majority of the Uyghur population. Other intellectuals had rejected the Russified surname style in the 1930s and instead adopted the Persian pseudonym *-i*, used by Turkic intellectuals since the Middle Ages. After 1949, the Uyghur people began to use the so-called 'unstable surname' form, in which the father's given name is adopted as surname. They thus became accustomed to writing their father's given name directly after their own when filling out official forms. Since the beginning of the new millennium, most Uyghur intellectuals have become keenly aware of problems relating to the standardization and Chinese transliteration of Uyghur names and surnames, and have begun to advocate reform. On 2 January 2001, Ablät Abdureshit, former president of the regional government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), for the first time called a forum to discuss Uyghur surname problems. Since then, the reformation of Uyghur names and surnames has become a key issue in wider Uyghur society. This chapter seeks to review the problems connected to current Uyghur name and surname practices, and considers the various viewpoints and disputes within the debate surrounding their reform.

Uyghur Names in Historical Perspective

Uyghur names have undergone extensive change during the long process of their historical development. Different modes of production (nomadic, agricultural, urban/industrial), divergent religious beliefs (Shamanism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity, Islam), as well as various civilizations (Eurasian nomadic, Tarim basin oasis, Han Chinese, Indian, Persian, Greek-Hellenist, Arabic-Islamic, modern Russian-European) have all exerted an influence on the name culture of the Uyghurs. Prior to the mid-ninth century AD and the arrival of Islam, Uyghur name and surname customs had followed the ancient Turki-Uyghur name-giving traditions of the Turkish Khanate (552–744) and the Orkhon Uyghur khanate (744–840). Thus, most people believed that their given name would have a magical impact on their future. Words such as *tömür* [iron], *qara* [black; strong; great], *börä* [wolf], *arslan* [lion], *buqa* [ox], *bars* [tiger], *toghril* [eagle], *shingqur* [hawk], *tunga* [leopard], *adigh* [bear] and *qaplan* [puma] were commonly used as given names during both the Orkhon Uyghur khanate and Khocho kingdom (850–1250) periods. Some examples taken from von Gabain (1989: 48–50) follow in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Common given names during the Orkhon Uyghur khanate and Khocho kingdom periods

Tömür Buqa	Altmish **Qara**	Ögrünch **Qara**	Qutlugh **Tömür**
Buyan **Tömür**	**Qara Tömür**	Altun **Qara**	**Börä Bars**
Är **Börä**	Alp **Arslan**	Oghul **Tunga**	Mänglik **Shingqur**
Äl **Buqa**	**Bars Buqa**	**Bars** Bäg	**Tömür Qaplan**
Inal **Bars**	Är **Toghril**	Khotun **Toghril**	Özmish **Toghril**
Toyin **Adigh**	**Qara Adigh**	**Qaplan** Bäg	Alp **Shingqur**
Taghay **Tunga** Sanghun		Ärk **Arslan** Sanghun	

Individuals had also retained the custom of using surnames derived from tribe-clan or totem names. The convention among the Old Uyghurs had been to form surnames by placing the tribe-clan or totem name in front of or after their given names. Examples taken from Sultan (2002: 62) follow in Table 6.2.

Even after the expansion of Islam, the royal family of the Qarakhanid kingdom (870–1212) continued to use Old Uyghur royal names such as Arslan [lion], Bughra [bull camel] and Toghril [eagle] as their surnames. Examples include Satuq Bughrakhan (942–56), Ali Arslankhan (971–98), Häsän Bughrakhan (991–93), Mänsur Arslankhan (1015–24), Tabghach Bughrakhan (1052–68), Sulayman Bughrakhan (1075–89) and so on (Xinjiang weiwu'er zizhiqu shehui kexueyuan lishi yanjiusuo 1991, 99–100). However, this convention was not maintained consistently over time owing to the growing influence of Islam. Furthermore, it was

never popularized among the whole of the Uyghur people and did not form a legal surname system.

Table 6.2 Surnames derived from tribe-clan or totem names

Uyghur Tapmish	**Qughursu** Altun	**Yaghlaqar** Inal	**Tatar** Apategin
Qipchaq Yörük	**Qarluq** Qutadmish	**Qitay** Buqa	**Märkit** Qaya
Indu Äsän	**Salur** Qazan	**Buyan** Qaya	Basmil **Sarigh**
Oghul **Tonga**	Shahquli **Uyghur**	Özmish **Tughril**	Arslan **Tughril**
Mänglik **Shingqur**	Qarluq **Äwruz**	Yaghlaqar **Inal**	Barghut **Kün**

Following the transition from a nomadic lifestyle to oasis cultivation in the Tarim basin around the mid-ninth century AD, many changes took place in Uyghur name and surname practices. During the period of the Khocho Uyghur kingdom (whose capitals were Turpan and Beshbaliq), the Buddhist and Manichaean religions became popular, and there emerged a trend of using Chinese or Indian names for religious purposes. However, most Uyghur names continued to be preserved in accordance with Old Uyghur traditions. Several surnames of 'Western Regioners' (*Xiyuren* 西域人, foreigners living in the Tang capital of Chang'an who originated from *Xiyu* 西域, the so-called 'Western Regions') can be found in Tang historical records (Cai, 1998: 38–39) (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Surnames of 'Western Regioners' found in Tang historical records

Abbreviated surnames of Western Regioners in the Chinese chronicles	Origins/birthplaces of Western Regioners in the Chinese chronicles	Local names
康氏 (Kang)	康 国	Kankia/Samarkand
安氏 (An)	安 国	Arsak/Bactria
曹氏 (Cao)	曹 国	Kebot
米氏 (Mi)	米 国	Maghiana/Mervy
石氏 (Shi)	石 国	Shash/Tashkent
何氏 (He)	何 国	Khiva
史氏 (Shi)	史 国	Kushan/Kesh

We can also identify Uyghur names and surnames recorded in Chinese form in Chinese documents discovered in modern times in Turpan and Dunhuang, for example, An

Jiasha (安加沙, Qoshun, a native of Arsak or Bactria), An Dahan (安达汉, Tarkhan, a native of Arsak or Bactria), He Mohedou (何莫贺豆, Ba'atur, originating from Khiva), Shi Teqin (石特勤, Tegin, a native of Kushan), Mi Tudun (米吐屯, Tutun, a native of Maghiana), Kang Yijin (康逸斤, Irkin, a native of Kankia or Samarkand), Cao Fulei (曹浮类, Börä, a native of Kebot) and so on (Cai, 1998: 39–40).

In the tenth century AD, Islam was introduced to Qäshqär, an important city on the southern Silk Road. After Satuq Bughrakhan, the king of the Qarakhanids (870–1212), had converted to Islam, the religion was popularized instantly throughout the territory of the khanate. From then on, the Uyghur people inhabiting what is now southern Xinjiang gradually began to use Arabic and Persian names under the influence of the Islamic culture. Nevertheless, in some places in the east such as Lop-Nor, Turpan and Qumul, the people continued to use Old Uyghur name-giving traditions even after the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when Islam had reached those regions. From the fourteenth century AD and owing to the prevalence of Islam, the notion of tribe-clan relationship gradually faded among the Uyghurs, and there remained only the obscure concept of *jämät* (clan) and a strong sense of belonging to oasis hometown. Later, following the complete disappearance of the clan-tribe system, the clan sobriquet came into being. Even today in some regions in Xinjiang, the Uyghur people continue to use their clan sobriquet after their given names as surname. According to fieldwork conducted by the Uyghur Surnames Research Group in Keriyä County in southern Xinjiang in June 2002, local people normally use their clan sobriquet following the given name in order to identify themselves from others, a practice also common in other areas of Xinjiang. Data revealed that some clan sobriquets such as Qoday (the name of a bird) or Qalun (a type of musical instrument) had been in continuous use as surnames across five or even nine generations of one family (Shinjang Uniwersiteti Uyghur Famililiri Tätqiqat Guruppisi, 2002: 256–7). However, although clan sobriquets were passed down from generation to generation, they carried surname status only in that they distinguished blood relationships between people, and could not be considered official surnames from a legal point of view.

A Survey of Modern Uyghur Names and Surnames

As Benson (1988) has noted, names in Xinjiang generally reflect the interesting intermingling of cultures at this ancient crossroads of the Eastern and Western civilizations. Turkic names commonly used in Xinjiang today include many Arabic or Persian derivatives, reflecting the deep Islamic influence, while Russian and Chinese influences can also be seen, as might be expected of a region bound by two powerful cultural traditions. Yet the Uyghurs have a long history behind their names that predates even Islam. Prior to the expansion of Islam from the West, the Uyghurs practised a birth ceremony during which they would choose a name for the newborn according to the naming traditions of the Ancient Turks or the Old Uyghurs. A girl would generally be given names that reflected beauty, such as Chechäk (flower), Yultuz (star), Aykhan (moon) and Hidligh (sweet-smelling). Meanwhile, boys were given names that symbolized strength or genius, such as Bars (tiger), Qaplan

(leopard), Arslan (lion), Alp (hero), Bilgä (knowledgeable) and so on. Uyghur names thus embodied the many good wishes of the parents for their children.

Naming practices only began to be strongly influenced by the Arabic and Islamic name-giving cultures in the second millennium, with personal names taken from the Qur'an and other Islamic religious books becoming the main source of Uyghur names from that time. In addition, some people (especially intellectuals) began to adopt in written documents the patronymic forms *ibn* or *bin* ('son' or 'father' in Arabic) and *oghli* or *qizi* (son/daughter of ____, in Uyghur). To give some examples, Ibrahim ibni Yusuf Khotani (Ibrahim, son of Yusuf, born in Khotän), Molla Ismätulla binni Molla Nemätulla Möjizi (Molla Ismätulla, whose father is Molla Nemätulla and whose pen name is Möjizi), Äysa Hashim oghli (Isa, son of Hashim), Märiyäm Saqim qizi (Märiyäm, daughter of Saqim) and so on.

For the following several centuries and until the incorporation of Xinjiang into the People's Republic of China in 1949, most Uyghurs continued to use a traditional form of address consisting of personal name followed by an honorific form such as *bay* [landlord], *bäg* [sir], *akhun* (a religious leader), *qari* (a religious title), *jan* (a respectful form of address), *törä* [chairman], *khan* [khan/king], *ayim* (a female royal), *büwi<bübi* (a female religious leader), *ap'aq* (a member of the royal female staff) or *qushnach* (a mullah's wife). Examples include Qasimbay, Osmanbäg, Ibrahim Akhun(d), Yasin Qari, Äkhmätjan, Älikhan Törä, Abdukerimkhan, Nigar Ayim, Büwi Patimä, Xädichä Ap'aq, Rabiyä Qushnach and so on.

Although many of these titles disappeared during the socialist decades, most Uyghurs today continue to draw names from a common corpus of Central Asian names originating from Arabic or Persian and reflecting the Islamic tradition of which they are part. Examples include Mämät (Ar.), Ähmät/Ämät (Ar.), Abbas (Ar.), Osman (Ar.), Iskändär (Ar.), Ömär (Ar.), Gülbahar (Per.), Dilbär (Per.), Rahilä (Per.) and so on. According to Mutällip Sidiq Qahiri's *Uyghur Kishi Isimliri* [A Guide to Uyghur Names], Arabic-derived names constituted more than 80 per cent of all Uyghur names in 1998.

Generally speaking, there are three regional characteristics of modern Uyghur name culture based on geographical location. Uyghur names in southern Xinjiang, the so-called Altä Shähär (Six Cities), have been most strongly influenced by the Arabic-Persian or Islamic name cultures. As the Arabic and Persian civilizations spread across from the west with the Islamic religion from the tenth century, a period of cross-fertilization of cultures between the Tarim Basin and Central and Western Asia began, which was to continue over the next thousand years. In the Turpan and Qumul areas of eastern Xinjiang, a portion of Old Uyghur names have been preserved. This is explained by the fact that, up until the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries, the Islamic religion and culture was unable to expand its influence to these areas. Turpan and Qumul were the last oases to be Islamicized in the fifteenth-sixteenth and sixteenth-seventeenth centuries respectively. Thus, even today we can find examples of Old Uyghur and non-Islamic names in use in these areas. Examples of male names include Turan,[1] Aqpasha [white king], Bosuq [entrance,

1 The word Turan comes from Persian. The struggle between Iran (the land of light) and Turan (the land of darkness) constituted an important part of pre-Islamic Iranian mythology.

doorway], Aqbäg [white sir], Tömür [iron], Tashtömür [stone and iron], Toqsun (a tribal name of the ancient Turks), Turdi [stopped], Tölän [paid], Selimsaq [garlic], Kösü [wooden fire-tongs], Kichik [little] and Mänglik [birthmark, mole]. Examples of female names include Tärkän (a title of the ancient Turks), Ap'aq [white, pure], Tokhtash [stopped], Törük [round, circular], Qaraköz [black eyes], Aqseriq [whitish-yellow], Yumilaq [round face], Yetärkhan [enough], Aqtoghach [white round bread], Altunkhan [gold], Köydürgüch [sweetheart], Oghulkhan [boyish girl, tomboy] and Chintashkhan [brick-stone]. Finally, Uyghur names in the Ili region have been influenced by the Russian culture. In Ghulja and Chöchäk, the north-western areas of Xinjiang contiguous with the former Soviet Union, Uyghur names are sometimes Russified by adding the suffixes *-ov/-yev*, *-ova/-yeva* or *-in/-ina* to a given name in order to form a surname. To give some examples, Tiyipjan Eliyov, Mirsultan Osmanov, Änwär Musabayev, Aminä Ghapparova, Khämit Abdullin, Patimä Zhakulinna and so on. According to statistics compiled by the Uyghur Surnames Research Group at Xinjiang University in 2002, among 1847 individuals surveyed 103 persons had adopted Russian-style patronymic-derived surnames ending with *-ov/-yev* or *-op/-yep* in the case of males, and in *-ova/-yeva* or *-owa/-yewa* in the case of females (Sultan, 2002: 216).

In addition, there are other regional features of the modern Uyghur name-giving culture. A person's oasis of origin or birth-place can often be easily identified based on his/her name. For example, men in the Khotän area will often be given compound names by adding the prefix *Mät* – (the colloquial form of the Arabic name Muhammed), as in Mättokhti, Mätrozi, Mätqasim, Mätniyaz, Mätsäydi and Mätqurban. In the Aqsu area, people will often be given names by adding the prefix *Tu-* (the colloquial form of the Old Uyghur name Tur/Turan or Turdi) or *Mu* – (the colloquial form of the Arabic name Munir or Muhammed), as in Tuniyaz, Tunisa, Tusayim and Muniyaz. In the Ili region, people are often given compound names by adding the prefix *Nur* – (derived from Arabic, meaning 'light' or 'sunshine') or *Mir-* (the colloquial form of the Arabic name Amir), as in Nurtay, Nurmuhämmät, Nurähmät, Mirsultan, Mirhayat and Mirghiyas.

There are also discernible commonalities with the name-giving practices of other Turkic-speaking peoples. In his study of personal names in Turkey, Ilhan Başgöz (1984) noted that a name may please or displease the angels, spirits and Gods, and correspondingly may have a positive or negative impact on the physical and mental health of the baby or on the social relations of the family in the future. The Old Uyghurs similarly believed in the magical impact of a name on its bearer. For instance, it was hoped that names like Yetär [enough] and Oghulqiz [boyish girl, tomboy] would change the course of events in a family whose daughters had always given birth to female babies. The names of the Prophet, the Caliphs, the Muslim

Following the Islamicization of Persia, this topic and the term were taken up by Persian poets, cf. Firdousi in his famous epic Shahname (Book of Kings). In the past, Iran (and, by extension, Iranian speakers such as Sogds and Tajiks) were often associated with a sedentary lifestyle and thus a high level of civilization as opposed to the Turkic speakers, who were mostly nomads and considered uncivilized. These days, the term Turan is sometimes used by Turkic speakers to denote the lands inhabited by the Turks, and may carry nationalist connotations.

saints and other religious figures were believed to carry the good characteristics of their bearers to the baby. Sometimes, the name of the birthplace or time of birth was bestowed upon children in the expectation that the sacred element attached to these details would be transferred. Other considerations such as devotion and respect toward a relative or friend, the structure of family and kinship, and remembrance of important events taking place at the child's birth were also instrumental in the selection of a name. Several Uyghur names owe their continued usage to such beliefs. For instance, names such as Setiwaldi [sold], Tiliwaldi [begged], Süpürgä [broom], Palta [axe], Tursun [may he survive], Turdi [stayed], Turghun [peace] and Chawar [rubbish] are given to boys to help them survive disease and ward off evil spirits.[2]

The use of surnames or family names was uncommon among the Uyghurs until the 1930s-40s. Under the influence of modern nationalism and particularly the Jadidist Movement under way in Central Asia at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, some Uyghur intellectuals began to recognize the need to use a surname alongside their personal names. Following the Russian Revolution of October 1917, Xinjiang had begun to be heavily influenced by Russian politics and culture. Then, during the New Culture Movement in the 1930s, a number of Uyghur intellectuals and members of the elite went to the former Soviet Union for further study. This practice became quite common since opportunities for higher education in Xinjiang were extremely limited at the time. There, they imitated the reformist surname practice of the Turkic-speaking peoples in the Soviet Central Asian republics, creating surnames by adopting Russified suffixes such as *-ov/-yev*, *-ova/-yeva* or *-in/-ina*. To give some examples, Sa'idullah Saypullayov, Abdukerim Abbasov, Äs'ät Isqaqov, Muhämmät Imin Iminov, Zunun Teyipov and so on. Thus, the Russified surname form became popular among some Uyghur intellectuals between the 1930s and the 1950s, and the system was imported to Xinjiang. Others, who had visited or been educated in Turkey, adopted the patronymic form *oghli* (son) or *qizi* (daughter). While some Russified names indicated that a member of the family had received higher education at a Soviet Central Asian university, others reflected a family connection or business contact in the Soviet Union. Yet the Russified surname practice failed to be accepted by the majority of the Uyghur people for the simple reason that it constituted an act of wholesale imitation without any adaptation. After the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s, Russified surnames gradually disappeared from daily use.

Other intellectuals who had objected to the Russified surname form from the 1930s adopted the Persian *ezafe* [pseudonym, pen name] *-i* after their surname, used by Turki intellectuals and scholars since the Middle Ages as a result of strong Persian cultural influences. Historical examples of this Iranic-derived surname pattern include Mähmud Kashgäri (eleventh century), Älishir Nawa'i (1441–1501), Molla Sidiq Yärkändi (eighteenth-nineteenth century), Abdurehim Nizari (1776–1851)

2 Names of value-less things, for instance, something that has been sold or begged, or (stinking) garlic or rubbish, were given to children in the hope of cheating harmful spirits (including disease) into thinking that the child was useless and not worth interfering with. Similar beliefs exist in Chinese practice. The name Turdi [stayed] here indicates the hope of the parents that the child would stay alive.

and Molla Musa Sayrami (1836–1917). Twentieth-century examples include Mäs'ud Säbri, Äkhmätjan Qasimi, Säypiddin Äzizi, Mahinur Qasimi, Zunun Qadiri, Qasimjan Qämbiri, Khämit Wäkili, Ibrahim Muti'i and Uyghur Sayrani.

The Chinese influence on local names could also be seen prior to 1949, not in the adoption of names from within that culture but rather in the sinicization of the name's original form. Thus, Uyghur and Kazakh government officials who associated closely with the Chinese Nationalists (Guomindang) often adopted the practice of using three Chinese characters to transliterate their names (Benson, 1988). For instance, Säypiddin Äzizi became Sai Fuding (赛福鼎), Burhan Shähidi became Bao Erhan (包尔汉), Yolbars became Yaoleboshi (尧乐博士), Khädichä Qadwan Khenim became Ha Dewan (哈德万) and Junäyd Bäkri became Zhu Naide (朱乃德).

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the so-called 'unstable surname' form, in which the father's given name is used as surname, has become extremely common. The contemporary Uyghurs are most commonly referred to by their given names only, with this considered regular, proper practice in virtually all situations. True surnames are rare and mostly Iranic-derived, while the concept of having two names is still regarded as alien (though apparently periodically chic in certain circles). Surnames and their substitutes are used only where precise identification is required, mainly for official purposes, but also when Uyghurs travel abroad, where the absence of a surname is largely inconceivable. In such cases, patronymic devices are generally used. Most common among these is a simple construction in which a person's father's given name follows his or her own (Hahn, 1991: 133). This usually implies a specific genealogical relationship, for example, Khaliq Saqi (Khaliq, son of Saqi) or Aygül Sämät (Aygül, daughter of Sämät). Thus, when people apply for a residence certificate or write their names on ID cards, diplomas, passports or other legal documents, they are accustomed to writing their father's given name directly after their own. This 'unstable surname' form differs from the stable surname systems used in most modern European nation-states, since the surname must necessarily change when passed to the next generation (see Table 6.4).[3]

Table 6.4 The 'unstable surname' form

First generation→	Second generation→	Third generation→	Fourth generation
Tokhtiniyaz Häsän	Sulayman Tokhtiniyaz	Äsäd Sulayman	Uyghuriyä Äsäd

3 See Scott, Tehranian and Mathias (2002) on the role of the permanent family surname in the production of legal identities in the era of nation-states.

Current Problems Surrounding Uyghur Names and Surnames

Repetition of Identical Names

One common phenomenon in the current Uyghur name culture is that many people tend to use a single, identical name, making it difficult to identify who is who. According to fieldwork conducted by the Uyghur Surnames Research Group at Xinjiang University in June 2002, 20,000 of the 195,455 local Uyghur males in the Turpan area were using the name 'Ähmät', constituting 10.23 per cent of the total population of local males.[4] Findings also showed that in some villages in southern Xinjiang, a quarter or even one-half of the population was using the same name. For example, only 600 names were being used by the 60,000 inhabitants of Chärchän and Keriyä counties. Averaged out, this means that every 100 individuals were using a single, identical name. Similarly, among the 5,000 inhabitants of Chongköl village in Chärchän county, 430 individuals were using the name 'Tursun', constituting 8.6 per cent of individuals surveyed (Sultan, 2002: 243). The result is a phenomenon whereby several hundreds of individuals are using the same name and as a result find it necessary to distinguish themselves from others using clan sobriquets.

Lack of Common Principles when Selecting Names

To date, there have been no legal principles governing name selection, with names originating from Arabic or Persian (that is post-Islamic expansion) constituting more than 80–85 per cent of modern Uyghur names. Ironically, many people do not even understand the meaning of their own names where these are derived from Arabic or Persian. Recently, some young parents have begun to choose rather strange names for their newborn babies. It is difficult, for example, to identify the meanings or roots of names such as Inarä, Ildanä, Älfirä, Dilfirä and Kanariyä. In addition, some Uyghurs in urban areas like Ürümchi and Qaramay currently like to choose European or Russian names for their children, for example, *Romanna* (Romana) *Rafael* (Raphael), *Renat* (Rénat, Renate), *Tamara* (Тамара), *Venera* (Венира), *Lu'iza* (Luisa), *Mars* (Марс), *Atom* (Атом), *Arsen* (Арсен), *Milan* (Milano), *Aprel* (Апрел), *Magellan* (Magellan), *Opera* (Opera) and so on.

Lack of Standardized Orthography for Uyghur Names

There are various examples of orthographic problems affecting Uyghur names. Most relate to the use of different spellings or versions of the same name. For example, a name originating from Arabic may be written in various forms in different parts of the world, and, correspondingly, in different areas of Xinjiang. Sometimes, an individual person's name may also be written in different ways on different certificates and official documents, causing endless practical difficulties and inconvenience. Take, for instance, 'Mämät', a common name for Uyghur males, which originates from 'Mohammed' in Arabic. This name can be reproduced in different forms, such as

4 Source for overall population figure: Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook, 2000.

Mämät, Mammät, Mähämmät, Muhämmät, Muhammäd, Mämätkhan, Mämätjan or Mämitim. Another example is 'Molla', a traditional Islamic title which is currently quite common as a name among the Uyghurs. Again, this name can be written in different forms in different regions, including Mollaq, Mollash, Mollam, Mollashim, Mollaji, Molläk or Mollakhun. To date, there exists no published, legal orthography or guide to facilitate standardization of Uyghur names. In the newspaper press, there are two conflicting trends regarding the spelling of Uyghur names. The first is to spell Arabic-derived Uyghur names in their original Arabic forms, thus Abdul'ähäd Abdulräshid (rather than Ablät Abdureshit), Abdul'äziz Muhammäd'äli (rather than Abliz Mämteli) and so on. The second is to use the Uyghurized form instead of the original form, thus Äsät (instead of Äsäd), Ämät (instead of Ähmäd), Mämät (instead of Mohammäd), Mätsäydi (instead of Muhammädsä'idi) and so on.

Chinese Transliteration of Uyghur Names

This has been perhaps the biggest problem affecting recent Uyghur name culture. To date, there exists no published guide in China governing the Chinese transliteration of the names of ethnic minorities, and it is often frustratingly difficult to correctly identify the names of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Chinese documentary sources. One reason for the confusion is that the Chinese language does not easily accommodate foreign names; these are normally forced to conform to the tonal and syllabic structure of Chinese when transliterated (Benson, 1988). As a result, a Uyghur name with three syllables, for instance, may require five or more separate Chinese characters to convey its approximate pronunciation in Chinese. The main transliteration problems with regard to Uyghur names are listed below.

Firstly, a variety of different Chinese characters may be used to represent the same Uyghur name (sound), or part of a name. Since there are no systematic guidelines governing the transliteration of Uyghur names into modern Chinese, the decision regarding which characters to use for transliteration has generally been the prerogative of individuals or teachers who help young Uyghurs to choose. This process normally occurs when a young person first begins to learn Chinese and thus before he or she knows the meaning of the Chinese characters in question. It can also lead to a good deal of inconsistency. For example, the common Uyghur female name 'Ruqiyä' may be variously transliterated as 如合牙 (Ruheya), 茹克亚 (Rukeya), 鲁克雅 (Lukeya), 肉赫娅 (Rouheya), 柔合亚 (Rouheya) and so on. Similarly, the common Uyghur male name Mukhtar transliterates variously into 木合塔尔 (Muheta'er), 穆合塔尔 (Muheta'er), 莫合塔 (Moheta), 默赫塔儿 (Moheta'er) and so on.

The second problem concerning the transliteration of Uyghur names arises when a Chinese author uses a character or characters whose phonemes, when pronounced, are remote from the name's original sound (see Table 6.5). This problem is also often apparent when Western names are transliterated into Chinese.

Table 6.5 Chinese transliterations of Uyghur names (remote phonemes)

Uyghur name	Chinese transliteration (characters)	Chinese pinyin
Rehimjan	赖希木江	Laiximujiang
Häsän	艾山	Aishan
Mehri'ay	美合拉伊	Meihelayi
Uyghuriyä	维古丽娅	Weiguliya
Hürmätjan	吾尔买提江	Wu'ermaitijiang
Ghäyrät	艾莱提	Ailaiti
Shöhrät	肖合莱提	Xiaohelaiti
Sänäwär	赛纳瓦尔	Sainawa'er
Ismayil	司马依	Simayi
Ghalip	阿里甫	Alipu
Päridä	帕里黛	Palida

The third problem relates to the fact that all kinds of application forms and official documents in Chinese contain only a limited number of spaces in which to write one's name; that is, they allow for a maximum of four Chinese characters. It is extremely difficult to fit a full Uyghur name into this limited space, because a Uyghur name with three or four syllables may require five or six separate Chinese characters to convey its pronunciation in Chinese. Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang have thus been forced to use shortened forms of the Chinese transliterations of their names (see Table 6.6 for examples).

Table 6.6 Shortened transliterated forms of Uyghur names in Chinese

Uyghur name	Shortened transliterated form (characters)	Chinese pinyin
Abdulkerim	阿布都/克里木	Abudu/kelimu
Abdushükür	阿布都/许库尔	Abudu/xuku'er
Abdurahman	阿布都/热合满	Abudu/reheman
Güljamal	古丽/加玛里	Guli/jiamali
Bübipatimä	布毕/帕提玛	Bubi/patima
Alptekin	阿里甫/铁肯	Alipu/ticken
Sahipjamal	沙依布/加玛里	Sayibu/jiamali
Ayshämgül	阿依夏木/古丽	Ayixiamu/guli

Finally, it can be difficult to equate the sinicized names (ones shortened to two or three characters in keeping with the traditional Chinese form) of Uyghur historical or contemporary figures with the original names they represent (see Table 6.7). The

Romanized forms of such abbreviations cause yet more confusion when they appear in Western language sources.

Table 6.7 Sinicised forms of names of Uyghur historical or contemporary figures

Uyghur names	Shortened transliterated form (characters)	Chinese pinyin
Jünäyd Bäkri	朱乃德	Zhunaide
Abduwäli Wäli	魏里	Weili
Burhan Shähidi	包尔汉	Bao'erhan
Säypiddin Äzizi	赛福鼎	Saifuding
Khätijä Qadwan	哈德万	Hadewan
Abdukhaliq Uyghur	哈文才	Hawencai

Uyghur Names and International Communication

In China, Uyghur names are reproduced on passports and other international certificates and documents using the Chinese transliteration system and in conformity with the Chinese naming tradition. This means that the order of a Uyghur name-surname combination must be reversed on a passport in order to conform to the Chinese tradition where given name is preceded by surname. This situation has created confusion not only for Uyghurs but also for members of the international community. All Uyghurs who go to Western countries to study, do business or visit relatives face the problem of discrepancies arising between the original name in Uyghur and the name as represented on the passport. While Uyghurs write their given names first and family names second as most Europeans do (with the exception of Hungarians), the Chinese authority administering passports in Xinjiang puts the Uyghur family name in first position and the given name in second position according to the Chinese convention. Thus, the name that will appear on all documents to be seen by the authorities in the destination country is effectively turned 'upside-down'. This discrepancy between the name on the document and the name used by the individual in everyday life leads to confusion when, for instance, the person must sign a legal document or when he or she requests a letter of recommendation in support of a visa application. Take as an example a girl whose first name is 'Khalidä', and whose family name is 'Ibrahim'; according to the Chinese convention, her name will be reversed to become 'Ibrahim Khalidä'. Then, following transliteration into Chinese, it will become 'Yibulaxin Halidai'. Such a metamorphosis will confuse even other Uyghurs, since Ibrahim (Yibulaxin) is a man's name while Khalidä (Halidai) always represents a female – and a female's name cannot form a surname within the Uyghur naming tradition. Some more examples follow in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8 Uyghur names reversed in conformity with the Chinese naming tradition

Traditional Uyghur name order (First name – Family name)	Sinicized Uyghur name order on Chinese passport (Family name – First name)
Khalidä Ibrahim	Yibulaxin Halidai
Ghunchäm Sämät	Saimaiti Wenqiemu
Ömär Dawut	Dawuti Wumai'er
Mehri'ay Mämtili	Maimaitili Meihelayi
Qälbinur Yasin	Yasheng Kalibinu'er

Local Approaches to Name Problems in Xinjiang: The Uyghur Surname Project

In response to the problems outlined above, some Uyghur intellectuals began to propose the introduction of a stable surname system. These proposals appeared in a stream of research articles published from the 1980s on.[5] The issue continued to provoke lively scholarly debate throughout the 1990s, so that by the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the new millennium, most Uyghur intellectuals were deeply aware of the need to reform 'unstable surnames'. However, opinions differed on what form a stable surname system might take. In this climate, the provincial authorities in Xinjiang gradually recognized that Uyghur name culture was a social problem requiring special attention. On 2 January 2001, Ablät Abdureshit, former president of the regional government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, called a conference to discuss Uyghur surname issues and to gather information from scholars. In the wake of that meeting, Xinjiang University and the Language and Script Committee of the XUAR set up a joint research group and started a project that would investigate Uyghur surnames. In March 2002, Ablät Abdureshit convened a second conference on Uyghur surnames in order to receive experts' reports. Then, on 23 May 2002, Xinjiang University organized a general symposium on Uyghur surname problems. The articles presented at this symposium drew much public attention, and problems surrounding the reform of Uyghur surnames subsequently became an important topic in mainstream Uyghur society. The second symposium on Uyghur surname issues was held on 1 November 2002 at Xinjiang University's Institute of Humanities, at which scholars reported the findings of their field investigations. Also around that time, a new book compiled by the Uyghur Surnames Research Group and edited by Azad Räkhmitulla Sultan, *Uyghur Familä Tätqiqati* [Research on Uyghur Surnames], was published and distributed.

In recent years, a great number of articles and research reports on Uyghur names and surnames have been published in Uyghur language magazines and journals, many of which deal with the problems surrounding the Chinese transliteration of Uyghur

5 See Döläti (1988, 1993, 1994, 1996); Sidiq (1991); Polat (1992); Nasiri and Ibrahim (1992) and Kaldir (1998).

names and the standardization of surnames.[6] Articles describing the experiences of foreign countries in reforming and standardizing their surname cultures have also appeared in Uyghur language magazines in Ürümchi.[7] After a lengthy discussion of the issues, the Uyghur Surnames Research Group at Xinjiang University prepared the Uyghur Surnames Programme, an initial set of recommendations for the reform of Uyghur surnames (Shinjang Uniwersiteti Uyghur Famililiri Tätqiqat Guruppisi, 2002). This was published and delivered to the Government of the Autonomous Region in November 2002. The recommendations were as follows:

1. Standardization of the Form of Uyghur Names

It was proposed that a standard Uyghur name should consist of three parts, namely A+B+C, as in Figure 6.1 below:

Given name (A)	Middle name (B)	Surname (C)
Abliz	Mämtili	Orkhun
Tursun	Qurban	Türkäsh
Rahilä	Dawut	Älchin

Figure 6.1 Standardized Uyghur name in three parts

However, with the sole exception of passports, ID cards and other legal certificates, people should normally use only their given name A) followed by their surname C) in the form A+C, as in Figure 6.2:

Given name (A)	Surname (C)
Abliz	Orkhun
Tursun	Türkäsh
Rahilä	Älchin

Figure 6.2 Standardized Uyghur name in two parts

An abbreviated form of the standard Uyghur name might be written in either of two ways (see Figures 6.3 and 6.4):

6 See Sulayman (2002) Sulayman and Orkhun (2002); Ghärbi (2002); Ismayil (2002); Kälpin (2002, 2004); Rahman (2002); Sultan (2002) and Kökalp (2003).

7 See Inayät and Dawut (2002) and Saqim (2001, 2002a, 2002b).

Given name (A)	Middle initial (B)	Surname (C)
Abliz	M.	Orkhun
Tursun	Q.	Türkäsh
Rahilä	D.	Älchin

Figure 6.3 Abbreviated form of standardized Uyghur name (Type 1)

Given name initial (A)	Middle initial (B)	Surname (C)
A.	M.	Orkhun
T.	Q.	Türkäsh
R.	D.	Älchin

Figure 6.4 Abbreviated form of standardized Uyghur name (Type 2)

When a Uyghur name is written on a passport or other international document, the surname should be written in capital letters first, followed by a comma, the given name and finally the middle name, thus: ORKHUN, Abliz Mämteli; TÜRKÄSH, Tursun Qurban; ÄLCHIN, Rahilä Dawut. In addition, the name should not be written in Chinese pinyin, but in the Uyghur Latin Alphabet (popularly termed the *yengi yeziq* or New Script), based on its original pronunciation (see Figure 6.5):

Correct format (✓)	Incorrect format (x)
ORKHUN, Abliz Mämteli	E'ERHUN, Abulizi Maimaitili
TÜRKÄSH, Tursun Qurban	TU'ERKAIXI, Tuerxun Kuerban
ÄLCHIN, Rahilä Dawut	YE'ERQIN, Reyila Dawuti

Figure 6.5 Proposed format for Uyghur names appearing on international documents

2. Surname Forms for Uyghur Females

The research group further proposed two forms that distinguish between the female's name before and after marriage (see Figures 6.6 and 6.7):

Given name (A)	Middle name (B)	Surname (C)
Rahilä	Dawut	Älchin
Mehri'ay	Mämteli	Kichik

Figure 6.6 Female surname form before marriage (A+B+C)

Given name (A)	Original surname (C)	Husband's surname (D)
Rahilä	Älchin	Tängritagh
Mehri'ay	Kichik	Uyghur

Figure 6.7 Female surname form after marriage (A+C+D)

In general, women should use the double surname after marriage. However, if a woman gets divorced, she should give up her husband's surname and resume use of her original surname only. A child would usually inherit the paternal surname, but he or she may apply to adopt the maternal surname in special circumstances (such as where the child resides in the maternal household following a divorce) (Sultan, 2002: 18–20).

3. Sources of Uyghur Surname Vocabularies

The Uyghur Surnames Research Group at Xinjiang University identified a range of different sources of existing Uyghur surnames, based on a poll carried out among Uyghurs living in Ürümchi, Ghulja and Korghas in May and June 2002. These sources were published in the Uyghur Surnames Programme (2002) as follows:

i. Names of forefathers or previous generations
ii. Clan sobriquets
iii. Names of Uyghur historical figures; place names including ancient cities, towns, villages, mountains, rivers, lakes and scenic spots in Xinjiang; names of various historical Uyghur tribe-clans; names of ancient totems
iv. Positive nouns and adjectives in modern Uyghur
v. Historical documents and classical literature of the Uyghur and Turkic peoples
vi. Names of Turkish and Central Asian Turkic figures
vii. Other sources.

Detailed findings from the original poll, based on the responses of 1699 individuals, follow below:

a. 547 individuals had selected their father's given name as surname (that is an unstable surname), constituting 32 per cent of individuals surveyed
b. 530 individuals had selected a male name from a previous generation as their surname, constituting 31 per cent of individuals surveyed
c. 331 individuals had selected their grandfather's name as surname, constituting 19 per cent of individuals surveyed
d. 85 individuals had selected the name of a Uyghur historical figure as surname, constituting 5 per cent of individuals surveyed
e. 72 individuals had selected their clan sobriquet as surname, constituting 4 per cent of individuals surveyed

f. 62 individuals had selected the name of their hometown as surname, constituting 3.6 per cent of individuals surveyed
g. 58 individuals had selected the name of the ethnic group (Uyghur), a clan or an ancient Uyghur khan as surname, constituting 3.4 per cent of individuals surveyed
h. 52 individuals had selected various items of vocabulary as surname, constituting 2.4 per cent of individuals surveyed.

Among a total of 1847 respondents, 1765 (95.6 per cent) gave the following answer on the distributed questionnaire: 'I will use a stable surname pattern in the Western style' (Sultan, 2002: 222–4).

4. Recommendations towards a Standardization of Principles in Selecting Uyghur Names

The following recommendations were made by the Uyghur Surnames Research Group:

a. While Uyghur names and surnames must be standardized in order to meet international requirements, ethnic and cultural traditions should also be preserved;
b. Uyghur names and surnames must normally be selected from among original Uyghur (that is Turkic) words. Since so many Arabic-Persian names already exist in the modern Uyghur name culture, a certain amount of these might be retained as surnames. However, it should not normally be permitted to select modern loanwords, for instance, those originating from Chinese or the European languages, as a source of surname;
c. An individual has the right to select his or her surname. However, he or she should not be permitted to change it at random once selected, but must do so through the proper legal channel;
d. In order to avoid the problem of repetition of identical surnames, people who belong to one *jämät* [clan] must select one stable surname. All members of the same family must take the same surname;
e. Children must normally inherit the paternal surname. However, in special circumstances, children may have the right to adopt their mother's surname;
f. Married women should normally use the double surname, that is, their original surname followed by their husband's surname;
g. The written form of Uyghur names must conform to published orthographic guidelines. This applies not only to the written form in modern Uyghur, but also to the Chinese and Latin transliterated forms (Sultan, 2002).

Conclusion

The accumulation of problems and difficulties surrounding the use of Uyghur names and surnames today have led the Uyghur people to realize the need for a stable

and standardized surname system. Ongoing research since the 1980s and growing intellectual debate over this issue drew the attention of the regional government following the start of the new millennium. Subsequently, the support and guidance of local government have helped to make this issue a hot topic in mainstream Uyghur society. From the spring of 2002 to the beginning of 2003, the public media in Ürümchi published booklets and broadcasted programmes in the Uyghur language with the aim of publicizing this issue on a large scale. For the first time in history, Uyghurs across the Xinjiang region began to think about the possibility of introducing a standardized surname system. Yet to date this move has not been realized. At the beginning of 2003, Ablät Abdureshit, former president of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and convenor of two earlier conferences on Uyghur surname issues, was promoted to a position within China's central government. Since then, no regulation has been established nor any decision taken by any governmental bureau regarding this issue, and the newly elected regional government is yet to field a response. This has inevitably brought about an anti-climax in the discussions over the standardization of Uyghur names.

Clearly, the problems surrounding current Uyghur name practices and the solutions to those problems are matters that can only be addressed with the full support of the central government in Beijing and the regional government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. An important foundation for a solution must surely be legislation to introduce standardized principles governing the use of Uyghur names and surnames. The success or failure of this issue will reflect to what extent the social problems of China's minority nationalities, especially those now faced by the Uyghurs, have been addressed by the authorities.

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PART 3
Socio-Cultural Practices

Chapter 7

Situating Uyghur Life Cycle Rituals Between China and Central Asia

Ildikó Bellér-Hann

Introduction

This chapter is a preliminary attempt to situate Uyghur ritual practice between Central Asia and China over the last hundred years.[1] The present political climate in Xinjiang encourages a scholarly focus on the cultural incompatibility between the Uyghurs and the Chinese. This tendency, which considers the Uyghurs as the bearers of a self-contained, distinct culture *vis-à-vis* the Han Chinese has been encouraged by Chinese ethnic policies and reinforced by Xinjiang's position within China as an internal colony (Gladney, 1998, 2004);[2] the Chinese 'civilising mission' only makes sense as long as such distinctions are maintained (Harrell, 1994). Research cannot free itself from political constraints: much of the scholarly analysis of the Uyghurs focuses on Chinese-Uyghur relations, sometimes presented as a study of identity, and rarely touches upon tendencies for peaceful interaction and accommodations between these groups,[3] while cultural links to Central Asia have been tacitly assumed rather than systematically investigated.[4] This chapter attempts to redress the balance.

Situating Uyghur ritual practice between China and Central Asia inevitably entails comparison. The comparative method in social theory has a long history but, while it has been used by many social scientists with diverse disciplinary backgrounds, some have been discouraged because of its obvious risks.[5] The potential dangers of comparison are well known and need not be repeated here. In the context of Xinjiang

1 This chapter is the outcome of research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council of Great Britain (R000 235709). I am grateful to Cristina Cesàro, Chris Hann, Rachel Harris, Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi and Joanne Smith Finley for their useful comments. Of course, I am solely responsible for all remaining mistakes.

2 Gladney applies Michael Hechter's concept, according to which under colonial administrations, due to 'hierarchical cultural divisions of labor', ethnic identities emerge which supersede class (Hechter and Levi, 1979: 263, quoted in Gladney, 1998: 47–8; Gladney, 2004: 361).

3 For recent studies on the Uyghurs see e.g. Bovingdon, 2001; Cesàro, 2002; Clark, 2001; Dautcher, 1999; Rudelson, 1997; Smith, 1999, 2000, 2002; Waite, 2002.

4 e.g. 'To be sure, the Uyghur are still oriented culturally and historically toward Central Asia in terms of religion, language, and ethnic customs...' (Gladney, 2004: 223).

5 For a recent summary of the place of the comparative method in social theory see Burke (2005: 21–6).

the main risk follows from the unequal power relations which provide the political context for Uyghur-Chinese co-existence. Although, in line with the prevailing minority policies of the People's Republic, the Uyghurs have been allowed a certain degree of self-assertion, the parameters of their cultural autonomy have remained rather limited. The reversal of the relative liberalism of the early post-reform period, further encouraged by the post-9/11 international 'war against terrorism' is exemplified by the increasing religious repression and the more recent changes in language policy. These are symptoms of a more general shift from the earlier policy of cultural pluralism towards a model of monolingualism and monoculturalism (Dwyer, 2005: ix–xii).

In light of this, the risk of political instrumentalization inherent in any exercise involving comparison of social institutions should be obvious: drawing attention to the institution of the veneration of the dead among the Uyghur might provide apologists of Chinese cultural and political hegemony with new material, linking it to Chinese ancestor cult. In spite of this risk, I argue for the ultimate benefits of such an exercise: describing and analysing details of norms and practices in different societies help us to appreciate not only the differences between apparently similar societies, but also the common features shared by diverse social settings (cf. Burke, 2005: 22). This in turn reveals how the diversity of social behaviour is constrained by the limits of the human condition, and, conversely, how the latter nurtures this diversity. The recognition of this dialectic may then hinder, or at least weaken, the forces of political instrumentalization, which are generally based on a static and monolithic perception of similarity and difference.

In a recent publication Dru Gladney has listed some points of similarity between the Hui or Chinese Muslims and their Han neighbours,[6] but then emphasized the distinct Islamic character of Hui social institutions as crucial in marking difference (Gladney, 2004: 145–8). Religion is not an obvious boundary marker between Chinese Muslims and Uyghurs and yet these groups have very distinct group identities. The obvious difference is language use. But when one moves beyond obvious boundaries of religion and language, how do we deal with other kinds of difference in social institutions, and in particular with those which are treated as the internal affair of the group? Life cycle rituals, implicitly or explicitly summed up under the label 'our traditions' both by local intellectuals and ordinary people, are just as relevant in identity formation.

My approach is based on ethnographic materials dating from the late nineteenth to the end of the twentieth centuries. For descriptions of Uyghur rituals I rely on indigenous accounts, European descriptions, the work of Uyghur folklorists, and my own fieldwork data from the mid-1990s. For those of other Turkic speaking groups in Central Asia and for Chinese rituals I use the available historical and ethnographic literature. Since there is no detailed ethnographic study of the Han Chinese living in Xinjiang, I have to resort to accounts of a variety of geographical areas where Chinese rituals have been observed and described. To generalize about any large geographical area is problematic; the dangers in the case of the Chinese

6 The Hui are known among Central Asians as Tungan.

are particularly obvious.[7] To counter this I propose to consider ritual practices within a well-defined historical context. Chinese and Uyghur rituals were embedded first in the imperial, later republican and finally socialist (and reform era) polities under Chinese hegemony, while the Central Asians consistently remained under Russian rule during the Tsarist and Soviet periods. The introduction of the market economy and recurring waves of religious policies, which are more likely to influence life cycle rituals, in both Central Asia and China provide further common denominators.

The term 'popular practices' is used for heterogeneous practices, which are accepted by wide sections of the population as normative and which integrate local elements as well as elements of larger religious traditions. It is my contention that normative rules in death rituals show a great deal of continuity in all regions discussed,[8] even though actual practice has always been subject to variation in response to political and economic changes (Leutner, 1989; Häbibulla, 1993; Rakhman, Hämdulla and Khushtar, 1996; Bellér-Hann, forthcoming; Ro'i, 2000: 509–12; Snesarev, 2003).[9]

Uyghur Beliefs and Ritual Practices

Embedded in eschatology and local religious ideas,[10] life cycle rituals pertaining to death are part of the 'communal sacra' (Gudeman, 2001: 30–4) and seem to be better protected than celebrations marking other rites of passage against the outside world.[11]

In line with the universally accepted tenets of the Islamic tradition, local beliefs among the Uyghur also embrace the idea of the dual spirit: death affected the person's body and *jan* [soul], but his *roh* [spirit] remains alive. The *roh* stays in or near the tomb until the Day of Judgement, when all the dead will rise. Following death, the spirits continue to actively maintain community with the living: on Thursdays and Fridays and during major religious festivals the dead person's spirit visits his home, sometimes assuming the shape of a fly. The Uyghurs say: 'The soul of my father and mother has come.' (Prov. 207.I.64).[12] If his family lives appropriately, as prescribed

7 For the significance of ritual variation in Chinese death rituals see Tong (2004: 41–6).

8 cf. Bloch's observation that ritual structure tends to be conservative and more resistant to change, a statement particularly true for mortuary practices (Bloch, 1997).

9 A comparison of complex social institutions can only be undertaken at the risk of significant simplification: regional differences cannot be taken into account here. A further simplification is that in this chapter I refer to the sedentary Turkic Muslims of Xinjiang as 'Uyghur' throughout the period under discussion. Finally, for analytical purposes I treat the Uyghur as distinct from other Central Asian groups, even though my usual geographical definition of Central Asia does include Xinjiang.

10 For more details on Uyghur eschatology see Bellér-Hann (2001).

11 e.g. in the Soviet Union, where life cycle rituals remained the least affected by state policies (Lane, 1981) In Xinjiang outsiders (including Han Chinese colleagues) are more readily invited to an Uyghur wedding, they are less likely to be asked to participate in an Uyghur funeral or a commemoration feast for the dead.

12 For another reference to the spirit-fly from the same period see Pantusov (1907: 15), 10.

by local moral tenets, the spirit praises God and asks Him to bless his family. But if he finds that his family and relatives are not living peacefully, he curses them (Prov. 212: 116-18). Following death the *roh* is in need of nourishment (Prov. 207. I.22, Jarring, 1979: 8). This explains why the backbone of the commemoration of the dead is the nourishing of the spirits (*arwah*) with the smell of food fried in oil (*yagh puritish*). When cooking, one remembers the dead and says the formula 'May this reach the spirits of my ancestors!' This can be done on any day, but it is most commonly done on Thursdays, because it is on this day that the spirits fly to Mecca, to return only on Saturday. The scent of the hot, spicy oil invigorates the spirits, so that they can complete the journey more quickly. When one's dead parents or close relatives appear in a dream, it is commonly interpreted in just such terms: the spirit has become weak, because he has been neglected and is in need of assistance. This need can also be met by burning oil lamps and incense (Bellér-Hann, 2001; Prov. 212: 114; Rakhman, Hämdulla and Khushtar, 1996: 184).

As my own fieldwork data also confirm, such methods could also play an important role during the weekly gathering of craftsmen commemorating the patron saint of their profession (Prov. 464.33R). Remembering the spirits of the dead in the hope that they will support the living has much in common with the veneration of Muslim saintly shrines, where supplicants ask for the mediation of the saint who is buried there (Bellér-Hann, 2001). Oil sacrifice is performed on the official Islamic holidays, on special days, as well as during the *Barat* holiday (Le Coq, 1928: 100–101).[13] The first ten days of the month of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar, are also considered suitable for the ritual visiting of graves and saintly shrines (Prov. 464.47R).

The purpose of Uyghur death rituals is to ease the burden of the dead at a time of transition from this world to the world beyond through prayer and sacrifice, as well as to provide material and emotional support for the living. The redemption of the sins of the dead is achieved through the payment of *isqat*, that is money distributed among funeral attendees as a form of redemption (Prov. 212: 104-6). As ritual compensation for the dead person's assumed material debts symbolic gifts such as sewing needles, cotton, bread and raisins may be distributed among the mourners (Katanov and Menges, 1933: 1178–81, 1936: 1184–5; Häbibulla, 1993: 323; Rakhman, Hämdulla and Khushtar, 1996: 134).

Ceremonies commemorating the dead (*näzir-chiraq*) held on the third, seventh and fortieth days following death also serve to ease the burden of the dead and these typically include animal sacrifice and a communal meal accompanied by praying

13 *Barat*, the most important 'unofficial' religious holiday includes the observance of a vigil during which people pray for God's forgiveness and food sacrifice is performed for the dead (Prov. 207. I, 56). Also known as 'the month of prayers', the month of Barat of the Turki lunar calendar, corresponded to the eighth month of the Islamic calendar, Sha'bān. Legends connected to this day focus on the boundary between the old and the new, the ending and the beginning (Horten, 1918: 277; Wensinck, 1997; Schimmel, 2001: 92). Among the Uyghurs the *Barat* has survived up to the present day as the most important popular holiday, even though it has undergone certain modifications due to religious repression under socialism (Bellér-Hann, 2001).

(Prov. 464. 27R-V.; Grenard 1898: 246)[14] Oil sacrifice for the spirits of the dead constitutes an integral part of all these rituals.

Death rituals are linked to official Islamic practice through the obligatory participation of male neighbourhood members in the funerary prayer in the mosque. The commemoration rites and the *Barat* take place in the house and aim at attaining forgiveness and redemption for the dead. As a result of religious repression and its official classification as a feudal superstition under socialism the *Barat* has undergone a certain feminization and domestication. The oil sacrifice in many rural and urban households seems to have persisted due to the house-centred, 'private' character of the practice in pre-socialist times. Far from being a folkloristic essence, funerary and other life cycle rituals may become the locus of political contestation and resistance to different forms of authority. In spite of the government's repeated anti-religious campaigns Uyghur village cadres are adamant that they would not forego a religious funeral, and they would never abstain from participating in the funerary rites organized for their fellow villagers, even at times of severe religious repression.[15] Aspects of Uyghur funerary and related rituals have repeatedly come under attack by local representatives of the scriptural tradition who condemned some practices, such as the commemoration of the dead, the *Barat* and shrine visiting during Muharram as non-Islamic. The rituals have survived the attacks even though they may have undergone some modifications. The commemoration of the dead under Maoism may have been reduced to small-scale events, but they are enjoying a come-back in the reform period. Together with weddings and circumcision ceremonies they have become public occasions for flaunting one's wealth. In a joint effort to mitigate the emerging inequalities among villagers, religious and secular authorities have repeatedly launched campaigns to persuade people to decrease participation and spending on such occasions, a policy which is often met by staunch resistance. In 1996, in a township near Qäshqär, the chief agronomist gave strict instructions to the local cadres to hurry up with the grain harvest. During the 15 days reserved for the harvest no weddings were to be held, and party officials at the township were not to register marriages or births. Funerals were the only exceptions, but in case of death only the closest relatives were supposed to take part in the rites. Disobedience was to be punished with fines. Peasants implied that they were most unlikely to observe the temporary measures concerning funerals.

Central Asian Practices

Ritual practices pertaining to the dead among Central Asian Muslims have been studied by travellers, administrators and scholars during the period of Russian imperial rule, in Soviet times and also in the post-socialist market economy period. At the end of the nineteenth century, Vámbéry noted how the Turkmen and Uzbek

14 On the third day only a small meal was offered to the mourners at the time of the evening prayer. A lavish commemoration meal was prepared on the seventh day and on the fortieth day (Katanov, 1936: 1184–5).

15 Explanations may range from admitting fear from supernatural powers to fear of excommunication. Similar was the situation in Soviet Central Asia (Ro'i, 2000: 515–6).

prepared fried cakes to be distributed among mourners (Vámbéry, 1885: 254). In Russian Central Asia, it was widely held that the dead man's spirit visited the house on the day of remembrance, which was from Thursday afternoon until Friday noon.[16] During this time a hot meal had to be prepared with oil, the smell of which was believed to ascend to the dead spirits. Turkmen oral tradition recorded by Soviet ethnographers confirms belief in the connection between the well-being of the spirit and the moral conduct of the living. The nourishment had to be provided before sunset, to prevent the spirits from being attacked in the dark by 'robber spirits' upon their return to the other world. These 'robbers' were assumed to be the spirits of those deceased who had been neglected by their own relatives and were in need of the nourishment of the others (Basilov, 1970: 135).

During extended visits between the 1930s and 1950s to Khorezm (in the extreme west of Uzbekistan), Soviet ethnographers also established belief in the dual soul (*jan/roh*), and the complicated doctrine of existence beyond the grave and retribution for sin.[17] Khorezmian eschatology parallels the Uyghur in many details, such as the appearance of the angels of death in the grave and their questioning of the dead person, a belief in heaven and hell and the last judgement, and veneration of the spirits of the dead (*arwah*) in general (Sukhareva, 1960: 31; Snesarev, 2003: 85–6). Funerary rites in Khorezm also included the buying off or transferring of the sins of the departed; the ritual was known as *dawra* or *fidiyya* (Snesarev, 2003: 100). On Thursday evenings in some parts of Khorezm all gates and doors were opened, lamps were lit and cakes were fried in oil (*bogursaq*) to welcome the dead spirits. In Khiva, situated also in Khorezm, such visits were also expected on the eve of the major Islamic holidays and during the first days of the month of Muharram (Snesarev, 2003: 91–2), and the main elements of the domestic rites included cleaning, the burning of lamps, the frying of ritual cakes and praying. The veneration of the dead in Khorezm was closely connected to craftsmen's rituals held for the spirits of dead masters (Snesarev, 2003: 95–6). Among the Kyrgyz in the 1950s and 1960s the day of sacrifice for the dead was Thursday (Bajalijewa, 2002: 4). The basis of food sacrifice was butter and animal fat which could also be replaced with oil. In some rural areas the distribution of some presents among the mourners took place to pay off the debts of the dead (Capisani, 2000: 237; Bajalijewa, 2002: 58). Soviet ethnographers recorded references to the doctrine of reincarnation in Khorezm: it was held that spirits of the deceased may take on the form of dogs and cats when visiting their families (Snesarev, 2003: 90). Elsewhere in Uzbekistan, the soul was thought to visit his relatives in the shape of a fly or a butterfly and fortify itself with the smell of oil as well as with prayers (Sukhareva, 1960: 31). While such

16 For beliefs concerning the spirit of the dead among the Turkic peoples in general see Tryjarski (2001: 90).

17 The expedition's findings were of course tailored to Soviet ideology, and insisted on a rigid division of pre-Islamic and Islamic layers as well as on the use of dichotomies such as 'modern' and 'backward'. So, for example, funerary rites among Muslims were characterized as almost completely Islamized and especially resistant to modernization. While such an approach is politically motivated and now out-dated, I still consider the ethnographic raw material useful.

references are absent from the Kazakh materials, the notion of the soul hovering near the dead body in the form of a fly is known from the Kyrgyz ethnographic materials (Bajalijewa, 2002: 15, 47).[18]

Vladimir Basilov drew attention to the interconnectedness of mortuary rituals and surrounding beliefs with other social institutions, notably shrine visiting and healing rituals in Soviet Central Asia (Basilov, 1970: 70, 92). The Turkmen reasoning, according to which Thursday and Friday are the best days for pilgrimages since on these days the saints (like other dead spirits) leave God to visit their place of birth, and are likely to be in the vicinity of their graves (Basilov, 1970: 135), also confirm the close connection between the veneration of the dead and the cult of saints.

Bruce Privratsky has found that commemorating the ancestors through 'emitting the aroma' (*iyis shigharu*), that is cooking in hot oil, is still central to contemporary Kazakh popular practices. This, together with the reciting of the Qur'anic verses, is at the heart of Kazakh religious practice, repeated routinely on Thursdays and also performed as part of the funerary rites. Most families perform the oil sacrifice once a week following the death of a family member up to the fortieth day, after which it is routinely performed on a monthly basis. If the rite has been neglected, they perform it if someone sees a family member in a dream (Privratsky, 2001: 87, 131). The absence of detailed studies of ritual practice among Central Asian Muslims under socialism and post-socialism makes it difficult to gauge changes over time. It has been suggested that in Soviet Central Asia, funerals among Muslims generally followed pre-existing religious traditions, even for local officials and communists. Commemoration services for the dead persisted throughout the Soviet era (Ro'i, 2000: 515–7, 522–4).

The Chinese Ancestor Cult

Chinese popular religion has been at the centre of scholarly attention for quite some time and continues to fascinate researchers. Regional peculiarities notwithstanding, it seems that the main features of Chinese ancestor cult as identified by Maurice Freedman are generally true for many areas of China and have remained relatively stable from late imperial times to the end of the twentieth century (Freedman, 1970; Eastman, 1988: 44; Leutner, 1989). While interpretations vary, authors generally agree on the centrality of the ancestor cult in Chinese society (Granet, 1975: 82). Essential features of the rituals have also been preserved among migrant Chinese in Singapore, even though the migration has caused important modifications (Tong, 2004: 2).

Chinese eschatological ideas are predicated on the belief of the dual soul: the *yin* soul was considered to be essential to life but relatively unimportant after death; it lingered around the coffins and the graves of the deceased but eventually dissipated from existence. Immortality was attributed to the *yang* soul, which was confronted in Hell by a tribunal of spiritual mandarins, and had to undergo judgement, punishment

18 Tryjarski argues that such beliefs were widespread among pre-Islamic Turkic groups (Tryjarski, 2001: 78–9).

and reincarnation on earth. The central concern of the living was to ease the passage of the *yang* soul, which required money, food and housing in the afterlife (Eastman, 1988: 45). In pre-socialist Beijing in well-to-do households, paper money and the paper effigy of a coach were burnt, to bribe the servants of the Devil to give the dead security during his journey. The reciting of sutras and the ritual washing of the body served as complementary means of symbolic and actual purification of the dead from their sins (Leutner, 1989: 254–5). Francis Hsu's anthropological study of the West Town in Yunnan China in the 1940s emphasized that the ancestor cult he observed was part of everyday practice (Hsu, 1949: 242). In Taiwan in the second half of the twentieth century, the ceremonies included burial, mourning, the domestic commemoration of the death day, the second burial, and the establishment of the tablet in the ancestral home, lineage hall or hall of the surname association. The minimal form of mortuary ritual required food, lamps and incense (Feuchtwang, 1974: 119–20). Rituals for the dead were not directed at all ancestors at all times; only especially important ancestors were worshipped, such as the founder of the lineage and those dead, who were known to the living and were not further than two–three generations removed. Those souls who were remembered through worship were the 'ancestors', those neglected and forgotten became ghosts. The latter were, by definition, dissatisfied, hungry and therefore malicious (Eastman, 1988: 45).

Ahern's (1973) anthropological study of the cult of the dead in rural Taiwan establishes a very close interdependence between the cult, social organization and lineage membership. In her view, at the heart of ancestor worship is the reciprocal obligation between the living and the dead. Beyond this, in the act of meeting this obligation, the living hope to inspire a further reciprocal response from the ancestors, to obtain through them the good life as they perceive it (Ahern, 1973: 91). Ahern identifies the hall cult with the public/male sphere and the domestic cult with the private/female sphere (Ahern, 1973: 92) As opposed to the mostly structuralist and often presentist analyses mentioned above, Yunxiang Yan's empirical study of the private life of villagers in Heilongjiang province in north-eastern China under socialism considers change over time. He pinpoints the disappearance of large scale rituals of ancestor worship characteristic of pre-socialist practice and the perseverance of the domestic cult and draws attention to the gradual erosion of some rituals and beliefs in the wake of the attacks on religion. The funeral reforms initiated by the local authorities in the 1970s prescribed mandatory cremation and deep burial. During the renewed campaigns in the early 1990s villagers who had secretly buried their dead were forced to dig up the remains and cremate them (Yan, 2003: 185–7).

James Watson makes the important point that in regulating Chinese death ritual the state emphasized orthopraxy, rather than orthodoxy, requiring Chinese of various faiths to send off their dead in ways outwardly similar to one another, while allowing them to maintain and perpetuate different religious beliefs about the rituals (Watson, 1993).

Discussion and Analysis

When Uyghur ritual practices are compared with those of Central Asian groups, the similarities are striking on both general and specific levels. The numerous congruencies include ideas concerning the fate of the spirit after death, which embraces vestiges of reincarnation as well as mainstream Islamic beliefs. They also include ritual practices which aim at redemption: the cereal based oil sacrifice, the commemoration of the dead and the buying off of the dead person's sins by the graveside. Qur'an recitals combined with oil sacrifice are also integrated into other religious ceremonies and show some connections to shrine veneration. The overriding significance of Islam among the Uyghurs and in Central Asia does not in itself explain such shared popular practices. The special significance attributed to the month of Muharram among the Turkic speaking Muslims of Central Asia and Xinjiang (characteristic of Shiites) is another problem, since this is typically rejected by representatives of the Sunnite religious establishment as non-Islamic.[19] Although these rituals have undergone considerable simplification, the expiation of the sins of the deceased has remained central.

In spite of the numerous similarities in ideas and ritual practice, certain differences must also be pointed out between Uyghur and Central Asian ritual practices. Privratsky links Kazakh ancestor veneration to lineages (Privratsky, 2001: 115–7), which does not hold for the Uyghur, for whom lineages had no significance in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Thus, a historically embedded comparison of strikingly similar phenomena in larger geographical areas may be helpful in understanding the complexity of links between social institutions.

Among Central Asian groups such as the Uzbeks the celebration of the Prophet's Birthday (*mäwlut*), has for some time been very popular (Sukhareva, 1960: 23). In contrast, pre-socialist sources make no mention of it among the Uyghur, among whom the popularity of the *Barat* points to influences from India (Sha'bān, 1974; Wensinck, 1997). This is an important reminder that the Chinese – Central Asian dichotomy may be adequate to position the contemporary Uyghur politically but to understand the complexities of cultural influences one needs multiple reference points.

Attempts to compare Chinese and Muslim popular practices are not without precedent. In his comparison between the Hui and Han, Gladney (2004: 145) stressed the importance of saint veneration and graveyards in Hui group identity. Although he also points to some similarities, he is eager to emphasize the differences which are primarily manifested in Islamic institutions. In analysing the Kazakh domestic cult, Privratsky also felt the need to spell out differences between the Chinese ancestor cult and the Kazakh veneration of the dead:

> The Kazaks do not have clan temples, nor wall hangings representing the ancestors, nor gold plates of ancestral names, nor candles burning before them, nor the Chinese custom of prostration before images of the ancestors… Kazak religion cannot properly be lumped with Chinese ancestor veneration, since it lacks personalistic acts of veneration (Privratsky, 2001: 140).

19 See Edmund Waite's chapter in this volume.

I agree with Privratsky's general conclusions concerning the differences and propose here to take a closer look at differences and similarities between Uyghur and Chinese forms of venerating the dead. The reciprocal relationship between the living and the dead, modelled on the reciprocal social ties among the living, is assumed among both the Chinese and the Uyghur. Death is perceived by both groups not as an end but as a transition between two states. Both eschatologies share the idea of 'double death': the physical death of the body, followed by the social death of the spirit when it is forgotten. For the Chinese, the forgotten spirits will turn into orphan spirits who cause harm, while for the Uyghur and Central Asians, the forgotten spirit may become weak and cause harm or bring bad luck for the living. Thus, in both cases, 'forgotten/remembered is a code by which the mass of undifferentiated dead is broken up' (Feuchtwang, 1974: 117). The similarities, however, end at this rather general level. In contrast to the Chinese, where a distinction between the public hall cult and the domestic cult of the ancestors has been made (Freedman, 1970: 175–6), among the Uyghur the veneration of the dead has no clearly definable public form. The funeral prayer in the mosque follows practices elsewhere in the Islamic world. Further rituals enacted at the graveside, and within the framework of other ceremonies in the domestic space are complementary to these and reveal many close parallels with popular practices in Central Asia. Reincarnation, which is central to Chinese rituals, among the Uyghur and Central Asians appears as a marginal and temporary phenomenon; the spirit fly represents the lingering soul rather than its rebirth.

While Privratsky emphasizes the lack of personalized veneration of ancestors among the Kazakhs,[20] my own ethnographic fieldwork suggests that among the Uyghurs it is not the unknown ancestors of a distant past who are venerated but the dead of the past two (at the most, three) generations, people who were personally known to the living. There is also a sense that sacrifice and prayers are due to the spirits of all dead people whom one knew. Thus, this veneration of the dead is capable of integrating contradictory tendencies, which may be accounted for by the suggestion that priority is given to real social ties in space over real or imagined blood ties over time.

At first sight, this brings Uyghur and Chinese practices of ancestor veneration closer to each other: Feuchtwang's conclusion about the Chinese ancestor cult in Taiwan seems to hold true also for Uyghur practice: 'The worship of ancestors is the use of the biological fact of birth selectively for social classification and for claims on certain kinds of social relationships' (Feuchtwang, 1974: 117). At the same time, recognizing the presence of personalistic elements in the Uyghur domestic cult enables us to highlight certain differences: the Chinese ancestor cult is personalistic but its emphasis on the importance of membership in the agnatic group renders it 'vertical'. Uyghur notions are no less personalistic but they attribute equal significance to a 'horizontal' perspective, that is to social ties among all people one possibly knew.

20 According to Feuchtwang the troublesome spirit identified by the diviner is always one alive within a generation or two, usually one within living memory (1974: 119).

Congruence and Accommodations in Other Life Cycle Rituals

I suggest that examining in detail the structure and symbolism of other life cycle rituals between the Chinese and the Uyghur would produce a comparable pattern, with many similarities at the general level and significant discrepancies at the more specific level. Here overarching similarities of the general sort parallel the many differences in detail. Patriarchal, virilocal marriage dominated both among the Chinese and the Uyghur in pre-socialist times, but while many Chinese groups were characterized by surname exogamy (Leutner, 1989: 145), my fieldwork data point to endogamous tendencies among Uyghur villagers. Birth, like death, was perceived as polluting among both groups. In both societies, the woman's female relatives were called in to help at the time of birth, though Uyghur women had the right to return to their natal households for the birth of their first and second child. In contrast, among the Chinese, if the woman gave birth in her natal household, this could prevent that family from having any descendants themselves (Leutner, 1989: 53). Death of the mother during labour or shortly after giving birth was interpreted by rural Uyghurs as the quickest way to Paradise; for the Chinese, it was seen as a punishment for the woman's sins committed in this or an earlier life (Leutner, 1989: 55). Among the Chinese of Beijing and environs, the baby's future characteristics were determined by the character of the first stranger entering the room after birth (Leutner, 1989: 62). In the southern oases of Xinjiang, this role was widely attributed to the midwife cutting the umbilical cord (Katanov, 1936: 1240–41; Prov. 212: 2–3; Prov. 207. II.12:1). In contrast to the Chinese, among the Uyghurs strangers were a potential source of danger for both mother and baby and therefore best kept away.

Liu Xin, who did anthropological fieldwork in Shaanxi province in the early 1990s, makes a number of statements which could equally be applied to the Uyghurs and to many other people all over the world (Katanov, 1936: 1192–95; Prov. 207. II.34; Prov. 212: 24–5; Häbibulla, 1993: 243–4; Rakhman, Hämdulla and Khushtar, 1996: 129): that everyone is supposed to be married, that not to marry is considered to be a failure in life (Liu, 2000: 75), and that marriage is a relationship between two families, which involves processes of negotiation and dialogue (Liu, 2000: 61). Liu suggests that the marriage ritual should be more appropriately termed a 'rite of blockage' rather than a rite of passage, since it consists of a series of encounters 'preventing' the bride from reaching her new room (Liu, 2000: 144). Similarly, among the Uyghur, reluctance to release the bride from her immediate household or neighbourhood was expressed by acts hindering her passage: letting her go meant separation but also symbolized the forging of ties with another community, achieved through reciprocal acts; obstacles were removed only in response to gifts (Forsyth et al., 1875: 86; Sykes and Sykes, 1920: 311–12). This ritualized blocking of the bride's passage is common among both the Uyghurs and the Chinese, but also in many other societies where virilocal marriage is the norm.

What accounts for the underlying similarities? Here we are confronted with a more general question concerning how similar social institutions may emerge in different parts of the world, and the role of cultural contact in this.[21] Such questions

21 See Cesàro's chapter in this volume on hybrid food practices.

are nowadays avoided by most social scientists (although there is a renewed tendency of implicit 'diffusionism' in certain works emphasizing the homogenizing effects of globalization). I am not advocating a diffusionist approach, nor am I interested in speculative evolutionary explanations, but the possibility of inter-cultural influence or borrowing should not be dismissed. In materials dating from the late Imperial and Republican times, we find numerous examples of peaceful cultural exchange and interaction between the Uyghur and the Chinese, though not exclusively in the sphere of rituals. According to a native of Turpan, Uyghur women adopted white as the colour of mourning under Chinese influence,[22] and keeping the birth of a baby secret was also attributed to cultural borrowing (Sykes and Sykes, 1920: 315). Inter-ethnic boundary crossing sometimes went beyond assumed ritual borrowings. In addition to hostility and lack of trust testified in Uyghur oral tradition, positive stereotyping could find its way into common opinion; in the late nineteenth century, it was widely accepted among the Uyghurs that Chinese books were full of wisdom. Chinese medicine enjoyed particular respect. and some local healers even resorted to buying medicines from the Chinese (Katanov, 1936: 1218–19). The systematic help of Chinese medical experts was sought in the 1880s, following repeated outbreaks of smallpox in Turpan (Katanov, 1976: 38–9). Another point of peaceful contact was interethnic adoption (Grenard, 1898: 167), a practice also attested in modern Xinjiang, and perhaps to some extent encouraged by current family planning policies. At times, boundary crossing could take place even in the sphere of religion: in the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries, charitable donations from a high-ranking Chinese official to a Muslim shrine in Khotän further enhanced the shrine's prestige (Stein, 1904: 227).[23]

Conclusion

The materials presented above suggest that the domestic cult constituted an integral part of popular practices among the Uyghurs, other Central Asians and the Chinese. The similarities between Uyghur and Chinese practices are of the general sort that one finds in many other regions of the world. Much more striking is the congruence of Uyghur and Central Asian practices.

Recognizing similarities between very different cultures, such as the Chinese and the Uyghur, may bring about a rapprochement on the general level ('we are not different to the point of incompatibility'), while pointing out significant differences on the specific level may prevent the political abuse of generalized resemblances. This latter effort may be enormously aided by drawing into the comparison Central Asian Muslim groups, with whom even comparison on the more specific level brings out striking similarities. In substantiating assumed claims of close cultural affinity between the Uyghur and Central Asian groups I have used the latter as a 'measuring rod' for the comparison of Chinese and Uyghur practices. The comparison has revealed the complexities of historical influences of ritual practice, which point

22 Katanov (1936), 1184-5, quoted in Tryjarski, 2001: 100. cf. Vámbéry, 1970: 341.

23 For Chinese visiting Muslim shrines elsewhere see Pantusov (1909: 436).

beyond the narrow dichotomy of the Uyghurs' position between China and Central Asia. By drawing attention to some of the shared characteristics of popular religious practice over large areas which do not correspond to ethnic and national territories, I am not advocating the introduction of new, overarching, territorially rooted 'cultural' categories: the ethnographic parallels from regions outside Xinjiang warn us against identifying religious practices in ethnic terms.

I have argued that the comparison of ritual action only makes sense in specific historical contexts. In considering patterns of social action among groups in long term historical contact with each other we may get closer to understanding borrowings and accommodations, which may be facilitated by the presence of certain underlying structural similarities. The erosion or modifications of ritual action may also reveal tendencies in responses to state policies as in cases where rituals become contested.[24] They may also be creatively mobilized by groups to claim or assert types of social identity. Ahern has shown how Chinese lineage membership was inextricably connected to the ancestor cult. According to Privratsky, among the Kazakh, 'it is not ancestor veneration but the collective memory of the ancestors as Muslims that defines Kazak religion' (Privratsky, 2001: 140). Watson points out the apparent homogenizing effects of state policy on Chinese funerary practice which at the same time allows for the perpetuation of underlying beliefs (Watson, 1993). Gladney argues that although in form and meaning Hui tombs display a great deal of diversity, 'they provide a common point of reference, they give evidence of descent from a long tradition, an ethnic and religious heritage that is distinct from, and in some cases in opposition to, the dominant Han society' (2004: 148).

To the best of my knowledge, the ritual behaviour of the Chinese Muslims living in Xinjiang has never been the subject of serious scholarly study. Yet, such an investigation could possibly take us further in our comparative enterprise. Situated between the Han and Uyghur, sharing language with one and religious orientation with the other, they may hold the key for understanding the positioning of Uyghur ritual behaviour between China and Central Asia.

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24 The drastic intervention in Chinese mortuary rituals as described by Yan and the cautious approach to Muslim sensitivities among the Uyghur contrasts sharply with Dawut's observation (in this volume), according to which Muslim shrine tourism is treated with undue suspicion while Chinese temple rituals are flourishing.

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Chapter 8

Shrine Pilgrimage and Sustainable Tourism among the Uyghurs: Central Asian Ritual Traditions in the Context of China's Development Policies

Rahilä Dawut

Introduction

Just as international interest in the history and culture of the ancient Silk Road has grown over the past two decades, so the number of tourists visiting ancient sites all along this historic trade route has greatly increased. The People's Republic of China has encouraged this new interest by allowing increased access to many formerly closed places in North-West China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Toops, 1999). Since the government of Xinjiang put forward the slogan 'Tourism is the big opportunity for Xinjiang' in the late 1990s, mass tourism companies based in inner China, as well as those based within Xinjiang, have begun to explore the region's natural and cultural resources. Uyghur culture has begun to be recognized and valued in new ways, and is now becoming an important part of the region's attractions. Some religious practices which were previously criticized or even banned have thus gained new acceptability in the interests of meeting the needs of developing tourism. In this way new spaces are opening up for local negotiation of the preservation of cultural practices.

An ongoing debate exists among some local government authorities and commercial interests about whether to preserve or exploit local religious sites in the region, especially the shrine pilgrimages which are commonly regarded as superstitious activities that have no place in an atheist state. Local authorities are especially worried that use of religious sites may promote Islamic practices among the local people. Meanwhile, business interests desire to exploit religious sites for their own economic purposes, and local people are concerned about the effects of tourism on their social and religious life. Inevitably it has been difficult to reconcile the diverse interests of the state, businesses and local people. In this chapter, I describe shrine pilgrimage as a form of local tourism practised by Uyghurs. I discuss its role in the economic, religious and social lives of Uyghurs, the possibilities of exploiting the shrines for tourism, and the conflicting needs of the government, the tourist industry and the Uyghur people.

Shrine Pilgrimage Among the Uyghurs

The practice of shrine pilgrimage has long been prominent on the global Islamic landscape. Its significance has been noted by many scholars (Hawley, 1987; Kieckhefer and Bond, 1988; Werbner, 2003). People across the Islamic world go on pilgrimages to fulfil a wish expressed in the name of a saint or to seek the blessing of a particular shrine. The tradition of shrine worship and pilgrimage is an important part of Islamic practice across Central Asia (Poliakov, 1992; Bellér-Hann, 2001a). In Xinjiang, there are numerous shrines. In the course of several years' fieldwork I have documented more than seventy in the Khotän region alone (Dawuti, 2001). Until recent years, however, there have been few ethnographic studies of shrine-centred religious activities in Xinjiang.[1] Chinese researchers have tended to be more interested in historical aspects of Islam among the Uyghurs, while researchers from other countries have often encountered difficulties in gaining access to rural areas in Xinjiang. A look into current Uyghur pilgrimage practices, coupled with knowledge of religious behaviour in the region from a historical perspective, will provide ample evidence that shrines have long been critical focal points of Islamic practice among the Uyghurs.

In the Uyghur language, *mazar* means 'tomb' or 'shrine'. It often refers to the burial place of a saint, or a place where miracles are believed to occur. *Mazar* pilgrimage refers to the practice of making journeys to the tombs of saints, which are scattered around the deserts and towns of Xinjiang. The *mazar* are the sites of pilgrimage in part because they are believed to have the power to cure infertility and disease, and avert natural or other disasters. Pilgrimage also serves as an assertion of religious faith. Many local cemeteries have a shrine around which people of the community are buried. The most common pilgrimage sites, which attract the greatest number of worshippers, are the tombs of kings, Islamic missionaries and Islamic martyrs (*shehit*) killed in *jihad* [holy war] against the Buddhist kingdoms of Xinjiang. Major sites of pilgrimage include the tomb of the founder of the Qarakhanid[2] empire, Satuq Bughra Khan,[3] and the Ordikhan Padishah[4] which is reputed to be the shrine of Ali Arslan Khan, the grandson of Satuq Bughra Khan. Shrines of Sufi leaders are also quite common, but their rituals are more localized. The most widely known are the tombs of the Khoja rulers of Qäshqär including that

1 For recent publications in Western languages see Sawada (2001a, 2001b); Zarcone (2001, 2002); Harris and Dawut (2002).

2 The Qarakhanid empire was established in the mid-ninth century and lasted for 150 years. In 1041, the Khanate divided into a western and an eastern part. The western part occupied the territory between the Amu Darya in modern Uzbekistan eastwards to the Ferghana Basin, with the capital at Bukhara. The eastern part was ruled by Hasan Bughra and his descendants from Balasaghun, while Qäshqär served as an important religious and cultural centre. The Qarakhanid empire was the first Muslim empire of the Turkic peoples.

3 Satuq Bughra Khan is reputed to be the first convert to Islam among the Central Asian Turkic peoples. His shrine is located 3 km south-west of Atush city.

4 Ordikhan Padishah [Court of the Emperor] is located about 24 km south-east of Harap county in Yengishähär prefecture.

of Appaq Khoja (Äfaq Khoja) and the 'fragrant concubine' Ipar Khan.[5] Although they are considered an Islamic phenomenon, many sites of worship are not directly linked to Islam. The tombs of philosophers and writers have in the past been important sites of pilgrimage for students at Islamic schools. Most famous of these are the tombs of the prominent eleventh-century Uyghur scholars, Mahmüd al-Käshgharï, author of the 'Compendium of the Turkic Dialects' (*Dïwänu lughat it-Türk*) and Yüsuf Khäss Häjib, author of 'Wisdom of Royal Glory' (*Qutadghu bilig*).[6] Both of these tombs are situated in the Qäshqär region. Other sites of pilgrimage are the tombs of craftsmen, which are believed to be effective in healing specific ailments such as skin diseases. Many tombs of female historical figures are sites of pilgrimage for women, especially those who seek to have a child. The most famous of these is the tomb of Büwi Märyäm,[7] also of the Qarakhanid dynasty. According to local legend, Büwi Märyäm was a sister of Ali Arslan Khan, and grand-daughter of Satuq Bughra Khan, founder of the Qarakhanid dynasty.

According to recent investigation, some sites of pilgrimage were also formerly Buddhist sites of worship (Dawuti, 2001). Tuyuq Mazar near Turpan, for example, is surrounded by caves containing Buddhist murals (though these are now largely destroyed by earthquakes). Worship here centres on a cave as it does in Khotän's Kokhmarim (Snake Mountain) Mazar, where people go to pray for rain.[8] Many of these sites are named after animals and plants, such as Üjmä (Mulberry) Mazar, and Ghaz (Goose) Mazar, pointing to their pre-Buddhist roots and further suggesting that the shrine tradition is not purely Islamic but has roots in a variety of pre-Islamic beliefs and practices (Dawuti, 2001). Also apparent in Uyghur traditions of shrine pilgrimage is the influence of Shiite religious practices on the Sunni Uyghurs. The Khotän region boasts the tombs of the twelve disciples of Mohammad, central figures in the Shiite tradition, who historically never came close to Xinjiang.

Most of the small shrines have no fixed date for worship. People go there when they are in need of help. Big annual festivals (*mazar säylisi*) are held in a few major shrines to honour the memory of the saint and mourn his death. These large festivals have played a very important role in the economic, religious and social lives of Uyghurs. As I argue in this chapter, tourism not only refers to travels to other lands, but also to people's visits to places within their own communities; thus shrines may be regarded as destinations for local tourism, just as much as they are destinations for tourists from outside the region (cf. Swatos and Tomasi, 2002). In fact, pilgrimage activities maybe understood as an important aspect of Uyghur tourism with deep historical roots.

5 Ipar Khan is considered by many Uyghurs to be a Uyghur heroine. There are controversies around this historic figure. Chinese historians call her Xiang Fei, the 'Fragrant Concubine' of the Manchu Emperor Qianlong. For a discussion of this tomb and its political implications see Zarcone (1999).

6 cf. English translations By Dankoff (1982, 1983).

7 Büwi Märyäm Mazar is located in Bäshkeräm county near Qäshqär.

8 This was a famous Buddhist site before Islam. Here too, Buddhist ruins can be seen near the shrine. For detailed discussion see Dawuti (2001).

The Ordam festival (*Ordikhan Padishayim säylisi*) is Xinjiang's largest shrine festival. It is held at the tomb of the martyr Ali Arslan Khan of the Qarakhanid dynasty, who died leading a *jihad* against the Buddhist kingdom of Khotän in 998 AD. The Shiite influence is particularly evident in the Ordam festival, whose saint Ali Arslan Khan is in many ways conflated with Ali, son-in-law of Muhammad, key figure in the Shiite tradition and also popularly known as Arslan [The Lion]. Also noteworthy is the fact that the Ordam is held on the same date as Muharram, a major Shiite festival commemorating the killing of Ali's son Hussain. The festival attracts tens of thousands of people, mainly poor peasants, to the Ordikhan Padishah Mazar in the middle of the Taklamakan desert near Qäshqär, in the first ten days of the month of Muharram. They come, some from far away, on trucks or donkey carts or on foot, to celebrate and mourn the saint. Old men come to pray; young people come to the Ordam to have fun and look for potential partners; women come to make a wish to the saint for a child. The sick come to bury themselves in the sand around the site, which is thought to have healing powers. Music is an important part of this festival, and includes *dastanchi* singing epic stories of local heroes or famous lovers; *mäddäh* telling religious stories accompanied on the *rawap* plucked lute; *naghra-sun ay* drum-and-shawm bands for dancing, and many *ashiq* (religious mendicants) singing *mäshräp* accompanying themselves on *sapaya* percussion sticks (Harris and Dawut, 2002). The Ordam is not only a religious festival, but also an occasion for people living in different oases to meet each other, have fun and exchange culture and information.

Figure 8.1 Processing with frame drums at the Ordam festival

Pilgrimage as Tourism

The shrines are most numerous in the Khotän region. Each county has at least one or two major shrines. The festivals here are based not on the Islamic calendar but on seasonal changes. Major festivals, among them the Iman Asim Khan Mazar festival, are held between March and October during less busy farming seasons. This is a time when the weather in Khotän is warm, flowers and trees blossom, fruits ripen, and *mazar* activities combine pilgrimage and tourism. For this reason, shrine festivals are called 'mazar tours' (*mazar säylisi*) by local people.

Shrine festivals include entertainments such as wrestling, story-telling, tightrope-walking, cock- and dog-fighting, and 'goat-tussling' (*oghlaq tartish*).[9] The normally deserted shrines become crowded during the festivals. Bazaars are set up to provide food and other services. Some old and middle-aged people take part in all the major shrine festivals in their localities around the year. The larger shrines serve as religious sites to pray for well being of the community and a good harvest, but they also function as venues for entertainment and local tourism. Major festivals serve as the largest gatherings for Uyghurs who are rarely able to congregate with people from other oases, providing opportunities for them to meet each other and exchange information. Shrine festivals serve as an important complement to the monotonous lives of the peasants. Most importantly, they provide opportunities for people to break the norms and restrictions of their daily lives. Uyghur custom imposes restrictions on free meeting between men and women, and on group activities involving both men and women, but at shrine festivals men and women take part in various activities together. Some young or single people go there to find potential wives or husbands. Arguably the festivals eliminate occupational, gender, age, and regional differences, and improve relationships between people of different regions, promoting unity, understanding and cultural exchange.

The festivals also provide economic benefits to areas located in rural regions that rarely have the chance to do business with the outside world. The site of the Ordam festival is an isolated spot in the desert that normally nobody visits at other times, but it becomes a busy and crowded bazaar during the festival. According to the custodians of the Ordam, more than 5,000 people have engaged in trade during past festivals. Ma Pingyan, writing in 1983, records that 238 stalls were set up at the Ordam, and 350 horses took part in games of goat-tussling (Ma, 1983: 39). There have been heated disputes between Yengishähär County and Yengisar County on tax rights and management jurisdiction over the merchants at the Ordam bazaar. In the end, they agreed to jointly manage the bazaar and split the tax revenue. According to the accounts of merchants from Harap Township, the closest town to the Ordam Mazar, they made more money during Ordam festivals than during the rest of the year combined.

Since the People's Liberation Army entered Xinjiang in 1949, shrine pilgrimage activities among the Uyghurs have continued although they have been disrupted periodically by political upheavals. The strongest assaults on religious practices came

9 Also known in English as 'sheep polo', the game involves men on horse-back competing for possession of a goat's carcass.

during the Cultural Revolution when religion was regarded as feudal, backward and superstitious. All pilgrimage activities were banned at that time. After more tolerant minority policies were introduced in China in the 1980s, Uyghur Muslims were for a short period allowed to revive religious and cultural activities and restore mosques. Some even attended organized pilgrimages to Mecca. Being able to get back to their Islamic roots was an exciting experience for Uyghurs. Community-funded mosques were built everywhere. As bans were lifted, pilgrimage also saw a revival. However, recent campaigns against 'separatism' (*fenlie zhuyi*) and 'illegal religious activities' (*feifa zongjiao huodong*) have caused the closure of some shrines and placed new restrictions on pilgrimages.

Because of these new policies, the Ordam festival, which has played an important role in the religious and cultural life of the Uyghur people for centuries and possesses great potential for tourism, has been banned since 1997. Since then, the place has been deserted, causing the mosque, the prayer houses and the wells to be threatened by encroaching sands. The damage caused by the banning of the Ordam festival on the local economy and religious and social lives of Uyghurs is immeasurable. However, the attitude of local authorities towards religious activities, and especially towards shrine pilgrimage and festivals differs from one region to another. In other parts of Xinjiang, the local authorities have recognized the tourism potential of major shrine festivals and allowed them to continue. In some cases, they have even provided official support. The Imam Asim Khan festival in Khotän is an example of this.

The Imam Asim Khan Festival is held annually in May, running from Wednesday to Friday for five weeks at the tomb of Imam Asim, an eleventh-century Islamic martyr who died, according to local legends, in battle with the Buddhist kingdom of Khotän. This festival in Khotän reflects more positive local government policies towards shrine festivals. The Khotän prefectural government and Jiya township government have recognized the tourism potential of this shrine festival, and guaranteed its normal continuation. They have also included the site in the list of government designated tourist spots. In 1993, the prefectural party committee allocated 480,000 yuan [about $60,000] to build an 8 km long road from the entrance to Jiya Township to the shrine, and spent 50,000 yuan [about $6,300] building a water tower on site to solve water supply problems. A total of some 20,000 Uyghurs now attend the festival every year. During the pilgrimage, the Jiya township government sets up a tollbooth on the road to the shrine and collects one yuan from each person. The revenue from this goes directly to the township. This is different from the practice in Turpan where tourist companies collect entrance fees to tourism spots and pocket the revenue themselves. During the Imam Asim Khan festival, the people and businesses that provide food, beverage and transport hail mainly from the local community. Therefore, the festival contributes greatly to the local economy. The experiment appears to have been modelled after policies on the *miaohui* (temple fairs), held in Han Chinese areas across China proper (Gao, 1992). These temple fairs, which include a significant ritual aspect as well as large gatherings of people, markets and entertainments, have been regulated and supported by local governments over the last 20 years to demonstrate official support for 'local folk customs' and are regarded as an opportunity to promote commerce and tourism. If this policy can be extended in Xinjiang, it may yet serve as a successful model for the re-introduction of the Ordam.

Figure 8.2 Pilgrims at the Imam Asim Mazar

Problems with the Exploitation of Xinjiang's Shrines for Tourism

Commercialization often hits a culture not when it is flourishing but when it is already in decline, owing to the impact of outside forces which often precede the advent of tourism. Under such circumstances, the emergence of the tourist market frequently facilitates the preservation of a cultural tradition which would otherwise perish (Cohen, 1988). In China the situation is slightly different. The successful exploitation of religious culture for tourism in other parts of China (notably in Tibet) has prompted tourist companies in Xinjiang to follow suit. Shrines have recently become a key commercial target for such companies and have accordingly been re-valued, reversing their previous negative status as sites of superstitious activity. In particular, the fact that the vast bulk of tourist revenue in Qäshqär comes from tours of its three major shrines (the Äfaq Khoja/Appaq Khoja, Mahmūd al-Kāshgharī and Yūsuf Khāss Hājib tombs) and one mosque (the Heytgah Mosque) has encouraged further exploitation of religious resources. As a result, some state and private tourist companies which are mostly run by Han have begun to buy management rights to shrines. However, this policy of opening the shrines to both Uyghur pilgrims and foreign tourists in order to exploit them as tourism resources conflicts with government policies concerning the elimination of 'backwardness' and 'superstition'. It thus presents a dilemma for the authorities in Xinjiang.

Under the governance of the People's Republic of China, shrine worship has not been systematically attacked except under the extreme policies of the Cultural Revolution. Its treatment has depended to a certain extent on definitions. The Chinese

constitution endorses the right to religious worship within the framework of the five acknowledged 'systematized religions' of Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Daoism and Islam. Yet hand in hand with this goes official intolerance of 'illegal religious activities' (*feifa zongjiao huodong*) and 'feudal superstition' (*fengjian mixin*). The definition of shrine worship has shifted between these two poles, depending on variations in policy across the Xinjiang region, and over time. Policy has been most hard-line in the case of the large-scale shrine festivals. As Xinjiang's political situation became increasingly tense during the 1990s, policy towards the shrines has been caught up in fears of the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. In fact, this is indicative of the lack of knowledge of local religious customs among local officials, since Wahhabi groups active in Xinjiang and in other parts of Central Asia are in fact strongly opposed to shrine worship.[10] Some Uyghur scholars have recently suggested that the banning of the shrine festivals may actually fuel popular resentment against the authorities (cf. Roberts, 1998), and have called for a redefinition of the line drawn between 'illegal religious activities' and the 'folk customs' of the Uyghurs.[11]

The question of which shrines to develop as tourist attractions has become a difficult issue for both the government and tourist companies. As we have seen, there are many types of pilgrimage sites centred on the tombs of kings, Islamic missionaries and martyrs, Sufi leaders, scholars and craftsmen. Some sites were formerly sacred sites of Buddhism whose importance continued even after local people converted to Islam. If we consider the three major tombs in Qäshqär, two have little connection with Islam since they are the tombs of famous Uyghur scholars. The third one is the tomb of Appaq Khoja who was an important Sufi leader. However, he is promoted to tourists as an example of the friendly relationship between the Manchu Qing government and the Uyghurs. One famous inhabitant of the tomb, Ipar Khan (the 'fragrant concubine'), is especially mentioned in tourist guides as a symbol of Han-Uyghur friendship (Millward, 1994). These tombs have gained government protection and the status of designated tourist attractions because of their geographical advantage of being in the vicinity of Qäshqär city, their unique architectural styles, and, more importantly, because they can be used to reinforce government propaganda about ethnic unity. This strategy enables the government to publicly demonstrate its support for Islam in Xinjiang while also promoting its own agenda of social stability and harmony. However, the protection, promotion and development of other shrines of a more strongly Islamic nature, especially those of Islamic martyrs, is a complex question that no one has a ready answer to.

Since some of the major pilgrimage sites were renovated and opened as tourist attractions, certain problems have arisen within local communities. In most cases, local people and even local government may have little say in the decision to develop

10 Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami [Party of Islamic Liberation], an underground Wahhabi organization in Uzbekistan, has violently opposed Sufi activities, especially the tradition of praying at shrines (Rashid, 2002: 122).

11 Ildikó Bellér-Hann also discusses the problematic nature of many popular Islamic ritual practices which fall between classification as 'feudal superstition' and the politically neutral category of 'folk customs' (*minsu*) (Bellér-Hann, 2001b: 9).

pilgrimage sites as tourism attractions. Most benefits from tourism are siphoned away from the local area, so that local people most often feel themselves as outsiders. The history of the shrines is often explained to tourists by Han Chinese tour guides who know very little about the local culture. Misinterpretation of Uyghur culture thus often annoys the local community. It is common that visitors are charged entrance fees to shrine. In some places, entrance tickets are sold even at the entrance to the path leading to the site or on the road. This policy applies even to local pilgrims, for whom ticket prices are too expensive. For example, the fee for entrance to the Imam Jäfiri Sadiq Mazar (Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq) in Niyä county in Khotän is 50 yuan per ticket, a price that prohibits most local Uyghurs from pilgrimage. Some pilgrims have expressed resentment about this and complain that 'the authorities are charging us for attending our own pilgrimage.' In some cases, since the shrines have been converted to tourist attractions for visitors from outside the region, the number of local pilgrims has declined.

The Case of Tuyuq Khojam Mazar

These problems can be observed at the Tuyuq Khojam Mazar in Pichan county near Turpan, which was recently converted into a tourist attraction. The Tuyuq Khojam Mazar, also known by the Arabic name of As'hāb al-kahf ['those of the cave'], is located in a mountain valley in the Mazar Aldi village, Tuyuq township. A popular legend recounts that seven saints sleep in the caves of this valley. There are no reliable sources on when the Tuyuq Mazar was established, or on its history. The site is comprised of a compound containing a mosque, and *gumbaz* (structures built over a shrine). The *gumbaz* are located near the foot of the mountain about 35 metres above ground level, before the entrance to the sacred cave. The cave can only accommodate five to six persons at a time. Visitors perform pilgrim rituals under the guidance of the shrine custodians. Muslims, both Uyghur and Hui, from throughout Xinjiang and even from Gansu and Ningxia provinces come here every year between May and October to perform the pilgrimage. There are numerous Buddhist caves in the mountain valley in Tuyuq Township. Cave murals created under the Uyghur kingdom of Khocho between the fourth and seventh centuries are still preserved there. This place was one of the famous Buddhist learning centres in Turpan in its time. Tuyuq Khojam Mazar and its surrounding caves have been designated a county level protected cultural heritage site by the authorities.

Even though Tuyuq Khojam Mazar is an important site among the Uyghurs, it was not opened to the public as a tourist site until 2003, when a Han-owned private tourist company based in Xinjiang bought the development rights to the whole Mazar Aldi Village, including the shrine, as a tourist attraction. When the company carried out a survey in January 2003, they planned to put up a gate at the entrance to the village to sell tickets to every visitor while issuing identification badges to village residents. When I asked the village residents for their opinions on this development, many expressed resentment, saying: 'We need an identity card to enter our own village?' and 'What if our relatives and friends from outside come to visit us?' and 'The village is ours, why should someone else decide who can enter here?'

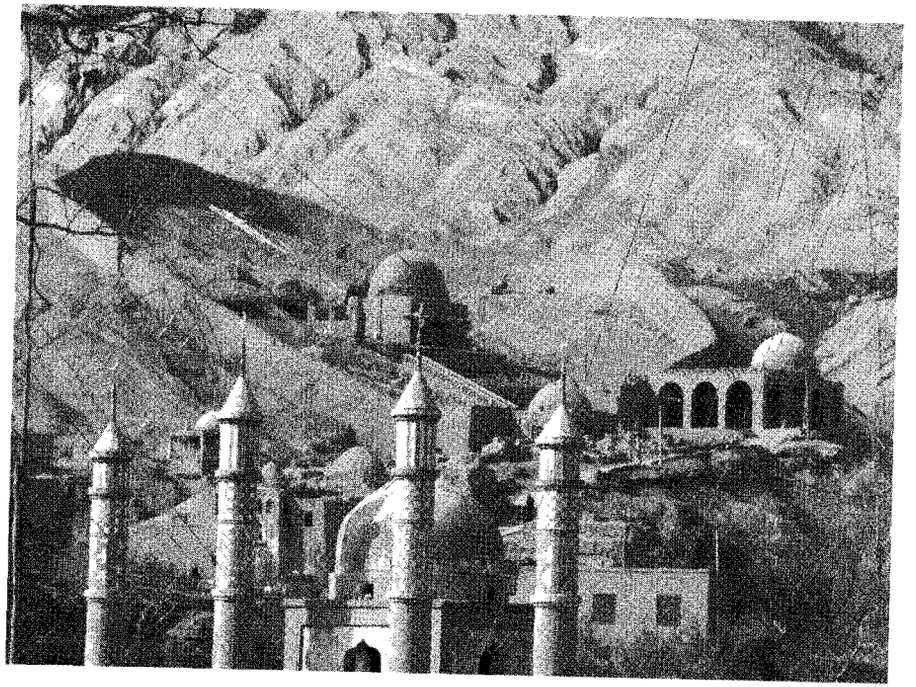

Figure 8.3 Tuyuq Khojam Mazar

In October 2004 I went back to follow up on developments. I found that tickets were being sold at the entrance to the Mazar Aldi Village to each tourist, at 30 yuan per person. Admission was free for Uyghur pilgrims, but they were required to stop in front of the mazar for pilgrimage, and were not allowed to enter the village. All the revenue from the ticket sales went to the tourist company, while the village got nothing from it. Therefore, some local residents complained: 'This is our village. We built this place. Our village should be allowed to have a portion of the ticket sales revenue.' While Uyghur pilgrims were not required to buy entrance tickets to the village, they were required to pay the shrine custodians six yuan at the shrine entrance. A portion of the income collected by the custodians was submitted to the village government. To my knowledge, this is the only example in the whole of Xinjiang where shrine custodians charge pilgrims directly. However, I also noticed that pilgrims paid them happily. According to my interviews, some pilgrims believed that this is a donation or offering to the shrine. The tourists, on the other hand, are not allowed to enter the shrine itself which is not yet open to the public. Instead, they visit the Buddhist caves and other attractions in the village. Since there is no official document permitting the opening of the shrine to the public, tour guides do not dare take tourists inside, but introduce it to them while standing outside.

Clearly, however, this is not a policy aimed at keeping non-believers out of a holy site. When I asked the shrine custodians if it was acceptable for non-Muslims to enter the shrine, they said: 'Government officials take their guests here for visits all

the time. As long as they do not say or do anything inappropriate it is OK.' Realizing that allowing tourists to enter the shrine will boost their income, the custodians seem to be receptive to the idea of tourism, yet other village residents and pilgrims oppose the idea. Some commented:

> This is the site of an Islamic holy pilgrimage. If anyone who pays is allowed to enter, this will affect its holiness. We perform cleansing and religious rituals before we enter the shrine. If it becomes open to tourists, its mysteriousness and supernatural power may disappear, and then the number of pilgrims may decrease.

Such comments echo concerns which are found all over the world, that if aspects of local culture are developed and promoted as products to attract tourists, there is a risk that their commercialization for entertainment and profit will replace their inherent cultural meanings. In other words, tourism may destroy the 'authenticity' of the local culture (Whalley, 1996).

The head of the tourist company which has bought the commercialization rights to Tuyuq Mazar is actually keen to encourage more pilgrims to go there to give a strong impression of religious presence in order to attract more tourists. He argues that commercialization of the shrine should not reduce the number of pilgrims. However because the issue is a sensitive religious matter, and fearing difficulties in convincing the local community about this issue, the company does not want to engage directly with the custodians and villagers, preferring to work through higher level government offices to open the shrine for tourism. Such lack of direct engagement with local communities is typical of developing tourism in Xinjiang, and a key issue which should be addressed.

The physical presence of tourists when sharing local community facilities can be a major source of 'tourism resentment' by local residents. This may especially be true if gambling, crime, prostitution and alcoholism increase as a result of increased numbers of tourists. Problems of tourists' insensitivity to local socio-cultural traditions already occur at some shrines in Xinjiang. Tourists are asked to respect the shrines and certain Islamic teachings: exposed arms and legs, drinking alcohol, speaking loudly, spitting, dancing, and playing music are all unacceptable at shrines. However, it is difficult to ensure that every visitor obeys these rules, as is evidenced at the Qirmish Ata Mazar.

Qirmish Ata Mazar is located in a mountain valley 61 km west of Onsu county town, in Aqsu prefecture. With the natural forest to the west of the shrine, the clear water of its famous 'healing well' (*shipaliq bulaq*), and various ancient trees, grasses and flowers, it is a very beautiful place and is renowned as 'the jewel in the desert.' According to legend, a Muslim missionary named Sultan Qirmish Sayid came here from Arabia through India with an army of 25,000 men in 650–51 AD to spread the Islamic faith. He died in a war with local residents, who at that time believed in Zoroastrianism. Qirmish Ata Mazar is today a famous pilgrimage site and tourist attraction, and was designated a county-level protected cultural heritage site in 1982. The mosque and *khaniqa* (a building reserved for mystics) situated on the site, and roads leading to it were renovated in 1986 by the county and local people. In the late 1990s, some Han Chinese developers recognized the tourism potential of Qirmish

Ata Mazar and contracted the site. They started to sell tickets to pilgrims and tourists alike and set up food and drink courts on the premises. Since the place does not have any spiritual significance to the mainly Han Chinese tourists, they treated it as an ordinary tourist attraction or vacation spot, and consumed alcohol and played music, ignoring the fact that it is a sacred place for Uyghurs. When I visited the place in 1998, I found empty liquor bottles and rubbish everywhere. As a result, the number of pilgrims at this shrine had steeply declined. By 2006, perhaps following complaints, the situation was somewhat different. The site was much more tightly controlled; picnicking was limited to an area away from the sacred trees, and the area was quiet and clean. However the 30 yuan ticket price was still deterring local (Uyghur) pilgims. The branches of the sacred tree, where formerly these pilgrims had tied pieces of cloth with prayers to cure the sick, or for the birth of a child, were now thick with ribbons sold at the site shop bearing the Chinese characters: 一生平安 (a peaceful lifetime).

Figure 8.4 Ribbons left by tourists at Qirmish Ata Mazar

Conclusion

Shrine pilgrimage has long been an important part of religious tourism among Uyghurs. The shrine festivals of Uyghurs serve as a focus for prayer and often for catharsis, that is, outpourings of mourning and personal grief. But equally the festivals are an important opportunity for people to have fun and pursue leisure

activities. The large-scale festivals are potentially a good resource for cultural tourism. If managed well, these may benefit both local communities and tourist companies. They could link many small fragmented businesses together by providing a common theme: 'pilgrimage.' They could also provide economic benefits to areas that would otherwise be unlikely to benefit from tourism. To this end, existing facilities could be utilized. For example, accommodation for pilgrims is often provided in schools and towns that reflect the cultures and characteristics of local communities. Shrine festivals located in desert areas like the Ordam can provide new opportunities for annual cyclic tourism in addition to the well-established tradition of walking tours.

Clearly, serious problems exist in Xinjiang's religious tourism industry. Firstly, the development and exploitation of religious cultural resources in Xinjiang is not yet fully realized. The reason for this is that the conflict between the government's drive for eradicating 'backwardness' and the desire to preserve and develop traditional practices as tourist resources has not yet been resolved. Secondly, according to field research on pilgrimage sites, very few religious tourism sites have been developed by either local governments or the local people themselves. The stimulus and funding for the development of cultural tourism in all locations in Xinjiang tends to come from outside the local area. Most tourist companies involved in this development abuse their power to operate strictly according to their own interests, focusing only on the recreational aspect of sites and neglecting the preservation of local cultural and religious practices. Even though such companies know that they make their revenue by exploiting local Uyghur culture, they tend to neglect the role of local government and the local people as hosts. This can lead to a number of problems, particularly in relations between tourist companies and host communities, and ultimately between host communities and the tourist 'outsiders' themselves.

For the sustainable development of religious tourism, the income from the event must be used to help preserve the area's religious and cultural heritage, and to support the community and its cultural activities. Local people should be attracted into cultural tourism both as consumers and providers, a policy which in itself will ensure the industry's long term sustainability. Locals should be provided with opportunities to market their own religious heritage, not simply for commercial purposes, but also as an important means to preserve, revive and, above all, represent their traditional culture. Focusing purely on commercial benefit by developing 'outsider tourism' to the shrines without facilitating the normal religious activities of local Uyghurs can only harm the sustainable development of religious tourism in Xinjiang. On the other hand, enlisting the participation of local communities in preserving and developing local culture will be key to its success.

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Chapter 9

The Emergence of Muslim Reformism in Contemporary Xinjiang: Implications for the Uyghurs' Positioning Between a Central Asian and Chinese Context

Edmund Waite

Introduction

The religious beliefs and practices of the Uyghurs have been profoundly shaped by the political reality of living under a state that subscribes to an explicitly atheist ideology in the form of Marxist-Leninism. This is evident not just in the dramatic onslaught on religion during the Cultural Revolution and on-going political restrictions in the contemporary era but also in the way that religious knowledge and authority is enacted at the local level. During the course of the fieldwork conducted in the rural neighbourhoods of Qäshqär [Kashgar], in 1993–94, the impact of long periods of political constraints and restrictions on international contacts were manifested in a strong reliance on the orally transmitted knowledge of religious elders who had largely been educated in the pre-1949 context, together with marked conformity with the inherited practices of the mosque community (*jama'ät*). This was combined with, and partly dependent on, a lack of access to alternative forms of knowledge disseminated through the print media: the Qur'an had only been translated into Uyghur in the contemporary era in 1986 and there was an extreme scarcity of religious publications.[1] At that time just one *molla*, Ablimät Damolla (otherwise known as Abdulhämid) at a mosque in the centre of Qäshqär, had begun to question various 'local' religious practices such as the holding of *näzir* [memorial feasts], regular attendance at the cemetery to pray on behalf of the deceased and the undertaking of rituals during Barat.[2] Political restrictions on travel to other Muslim societies

1 This chapter is based on fieldwork conducted in Uyghur in Qäshqär in 1993–94 together with two shorter visits in the summers of 2003 and 2004. I am grateful to the Universities' China Committee in London (UCCL) and the Committee for Central and Inner Asia (CCIA) for financing the 2003 research and to the British Academy (Small Research Grants) for funding my 2004 research.

2 Barat takes place on the nights preceding the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth days of the month of *Sha'bān* of the Arabic calendar which is more commonly known as the month of Barat in Uyghur. It is believed, according to religious tradition, that God will take account of all the sins that each individual has committed in the previous year and will plan the events

together with the state's secular appropriation of the modern education system and print media had served to hinder the spread of reformist influences and bolster 'traditional', orally transmitted religion at the local level. More recently, the inherited knowledge of religious elders has been placed under greater scrutiny by reformist Muslims claiming to uphold a more 'orthodox' form of Islam, a development that can partly be attributed to increasing transnational links and greater access to the scripturalist traditions of Islam. Labelled 'Wahhabi' by the Uyghur populace, these reformist Muslims have begun to challenge a range of 'local' religious practices that have previously been regarded as central aspects of the Muslim faith.

This chapter aims specifically to analyse the reformist challenge to local religious practices in the oasis of Qäshqär within the broader context of the impact of the state in both shaping and restricting the turn towards religious orthodoxy. I use the term 'reformist' as a gloss on any Islamic movement that challenges existing patterns of religious authority, knowledge and practice.[3] Before analysing these contemporary developments, it is important to take a longer-term historical perspective in order to illustrate the point that the social conditions for reformism were in place at the first half of the twentieth century before being stifled, ultimately, by the onset of socialist rule.

The Historical Context: The Rise and Fall of Muslim Reformism in Xinjiang Province

The inhabitants of Xinjiang Province were affected by the rise of reformist ideologies that affected Muslim societies on a global scale at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. As early as 1885, the brothers Hüsäyn Musabayov (1844–1926) and Bawudun Musabayov (1855–1928), wealthy merchants who had travelled widely in Germany, Turkey and Russia, established a school in Atush that was influenced by the *usul-i jadid* (new method) education movement as well as pan-Turkic trends emanating from Turkey (Millward and Tursun, 2004: 72).[4] The 1910s and 1920s saw the growth of these reformist schools in the Atush and Qäshqär area, one of which was led by Ahmad Kamal, a citizen of the Ottoman Empire, who employed methods 'imported from the Muslim west' and encouraged his pupils to regard the Caliph as their spiritual father (Forbes, 1986: 18). The Turpan area was another important focal point for Jadid-style activities by members of the emerging mercantile elite, such as Mäkhsut Muhiti who had travelled to Russian Central Asia in 1910–1913 and opened a modern Turkic-language school in Astana (near Turpan) in 1913. The 1930s saw the expansion of 'scientific' (*pänni*) schools in Qäshqär

of the forthcoming year. Barat entails the staying awake for these three nights (the vigil being known as *tünäk*) in order to engage in prayer and other rituals. In popular usage, the terms *barat* and *tünäk* tend to be used interchangeably to describe the rituals that take place during this period.

3 I am using the term reform/reformist here in general terms to include developments that have been described elsewhere in the literature as 'revivalist' (e.g. Anwar, 1987), 'religious activist' (e.g. Eickelman, 1992), 'modernist' (e.g. Bowen, 1993), 'Islamist' (e.g. Brenner, 1996) and the rather more problematic 'fundamentalist' (e.g. Bernal, 1994).

4 On Central Asian Jadidism see Khalid (1998).

together with various efforts to reform *mädräsä* education (Bellér-Hann, 2000: 61–6).

Those embarking on a reformist project faced a twofold challenge from the conservative clergy opposed to the teaching of secular subjects and an extremely adverse political environment. Yang Zengxin, who was the Republican Governor of Xinjiang from 1912 to 1928, and his successor Jin Shuren (who ruled from 1928 to 1934) sought to isolate the region from external influences, imposed censorship and were wary of educational innovations that might challenge the political status quo. Although the rise to power of Sheng Shicai as governor of Xinjiang in 1934 initially led to a more liberal period, allowing for the flourishing of reformist newspapers, journals and schools,[5] the consolidation of Sheng's political control from 1937 onwards ushered in a period of brutal repression in emulation of the Stalinist purges. Muslim reformist intellectuals faced particular persecution during Sheng's ten years of absolute power in Xinjiang, in which an estimated 100,000 people were arrested (Forbes, 1986: 161).

The imposition of socialist rule brought to an end indigenous efforts to redefine local Muslim society in accordance with the perceived requirements of modernity. However, the pre-1949 era of reformism can provide an important symbolic source for religious inspiration and guidance in the present. In particular the figure of Abduqadir Damolla (1862–1924), a reformist cleric who expanded the new method education in Qäshqär, was frequently drawn upon, in recent fieldwork interviews with young Uyghurs, as a moral exemplar who combined religious piety and the understanding of 'true Islam' with a striving for modern learning and development.[6]

From 1949 onwards, state policy towards Islam and religion in general in China has oscillated between radical intolerance, based on the imposition of the atheist principle underpinning Marxism-Leninism, such as during the Great Leap Forward (1958–62) and the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), with controlled tolerance of religious institutions that are co-opted under the auspices of the state. This process of co-opting Islamic institutions is particularly a feature of the so-called reform era (from 1978 onwards) which has seen a dramatic rebuilding and repair of mosques combined with state efforts to license religious leaders under the auspices of the China Islamic Association. The 1990s have seen efforts to tighten the net of state-controlled religion while clamping down on unofficial forms of Islam, partly in response to the perceived link between 'illegal' religious activities or religious extremism and separatism or 'splittism' (*fenlie zhuyi*). From 1996 onwards illegal

5 The newly formed Qäshqär Uyghur Progress Union established a reformist newspaper, *Yengi Hayat*, in 1934. The newspaper's articles included features on Uyghur politics, culture and poetry, as well as international events, with a particular emphasis on Turkey and the Middle East. Circulation of the newspaper was substantial; 2,500 copies were circulated weekly over the next two years before publication was halted by the government. The Qäshqär Uyghur Progress Union also engaged in an intensive construction of reformist schools which resembled the Jadid schools. By 1936, there were no less than seventeen schools serving over 500 students (Rudelson, 1997: 56).

6 A popular biography of Abduqadir Damolla has recently been published in Uyghur (Rozi, 2003). Some of Abduqadir's writings have also recently been published. For example, see Abduvars (2002).

religious activities and separatism have been much more explicitly linked in official discourse. A key landmark in this respect was the introduction of the so-called 'Strike Hard' campaign throughout China at the end of April 1996 which entailed an onslaught on all forms of criminal and violent activity. In the case of Xinjiang, the 'Strike Hard' campaign was clearly linked to the effort to combat separatism which in turn was linked to 'unlawful religious activities' (Dillon, 2004: 85). This introduced more stringent efforts to eradicate 'illegal' mosques and religious schools and sought to increase political training among clergy as well as combat religious practices among party members. Following major riots in Ili in February 1997 as well as other cases of ethnic unrest, the principles of the Strike Hard were reaffirmed in April 1997 with a renewed 'intensive special campaign' targeted at 'national separatists and religious extremists' together with the strengthening of management over legal religious practices (Dillon, 2004: 103).

More recently, China has explicitly sought to link its struggle against separatism in Xinjiang with the global 'war on terror' and has stepped up efforts to combat both separatism and unlicensed religious activities (Amnesty International, 2002). This clampdown has entailed 'banning' some religious practices during the holy month of Ramadan, closing mosques, increasing official controls over the Islamic clergy in the region, and detaining or arresting religious leaders deemed to be 'unpatriotic' or 'subversive' (Amnesty International, 2002).

Rather than outline in detail the nature of restrictions imposed by the Chinese state on religion, my primary concern here is to stress the way socialist rule has undermined the social basis of reformism. The significance of modern, mass education systems in broadening access to religious knowledge and disseminating new religious ideologies is illustrated in numerous ethnographic examples from different Muslim societies.[7] The onset of socialist rule meant not only an end to the reformist schools that sought to initiate a renewal of Muslim faith in keeping with the requirements of modernity, but also ensured that all those who received a secondary and advanced education were subjected to an entirely secular education that also enshrined the principle of religion as feudal holdover that was destined to wither away.

In the contemporary context, university students in Xinjiang – and state employees in general – are forbidden from praying or undertaking the fast and these measures have been strictly enforced since 1996. For example, students who have recently been found praying at the Qäshqär Teachers College (*Qäshqär span shöyüni*) have been expelled, with the announcement being broadcast on the college's loudspeaker system. Precisely that strata – those that have received a secondary education or higher – that has been most active in religious revivalist movements in many Muslim societies is therefore prevented from engaging in any form of religious discourse

7 See for example Masud (1990) who analyses the way 'new intellectuals' (educated in western-style schools and universities) re-evaluate 'traditional' doctrine. Nagata (1982) describes how the foreign-educated intelligentsia in Malaysia has challenged the traditional legitimacy of the rural ulama (Islamic leaders) in Malaysia. Horvatich (1994) analyses the impact of 'mass education' in shaping Islamist discourses in the Philippines and the subsequent challenge to local religious practices. See also Eickelman and Piscatori (1996: 43).

or practice on a public level.[8] In rural and urban neighbourhoods (*mähällä*) where non-state sector employees are allowed to attend the mosque and engage in officially sanctioned religious activities the impact of the broader political context is also evident. The rural neighbourhoods of Qäshqär (where I have focused my fieldwork) have been characterized by a strong reliance on the orally transmitted knowledge of religious elders educated in the pre-socialist era, which is scarcely surprising given the upheaval that has occurred to religious education and the lack of access to religious information disseminated through print and electronic media. The political closure that accompanied the onset of socialist rule, and particularly following the Sino-Soviet Split in the 1960s, meant that Uyghurs had much reduced access to religious ideologies in other Muslim societies.[9] Despite these structural constraints against Muslim reformism, the increasing opening up of Xinjiang to increasing trans-national linkages with Pakistan, the former Soviet Central Asian states and beyond has had important implications in paving the way for a broader range of Muslim ideologies to be disseminated to the region.

The Emergence of Muslim Reformism in Contemporary Qäshqär

The first individual to seek to explicitly reform religion in contemporary Qäshqär was Abdulhämid (otherwise known as Ablimät Damolla) who travelled in the Middle East and undertaken a pilgrimage (*häj*) to Mecca in the 1980s. He organized the expansion of a mosque in the north of the town, known as Toqquz Tash mosque, where he propagated a more 'orthodox' version of Islam. He criticized various 'local' religious practices, such as *näzir* (regular attendance at the cemetery to pray on behalf of the deceased) and the payment of *mollas* for Qur'anic recitals, as being un-Islamic. The influence of Abdulhämid's time in Saudi Arabia was clearly evident in the new forms of prayer that he introduced: he encouraged his followers to pray according to the requirements of the Hanbalī school (predominant in Saudi Arabia) rather than Hanafī legal school which the Uyghurs and the vast majority of other Central Asian peoples have traditionally subscribed to. The Hanbalī rite of clasping hands at the centre of the chest while standing for prayer (rather than clasped right over left at the waist above the navel in the Hanafī rite) and the declaration of the word 'Amin' out

8 Eickelman (1992: 646) argues that 'Although religious activism has many sources, it appeals mainly to those who have benefited from modern education. In 1953, for example, only 22 per cent of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers were *not* of the educated urban middle classes (Piscatori, 1986: 29).'

9 An important feature of reformist movements is that they are frequently informed by international ties of travel, trade as well as study in major Muslim centres. Examples in the anthropological literature include Launay's research (1990) on the Ivory Coast in which he describes how those members of the Dyula ethnic group who travelled to Mecca and Medina for pilgrimage or religious learning returned to advocate greater orthodoxy – thus undermining the established order based upon local notions of scholarly and political legitimacy. Zainah Anwar (1987) reveals that Islamic revivalism within Malaysia's higher education institutions has been shaped by Malaysian students who have been exposed to transnational Muslim influences at British universities.

loud (rather than silently) at the end of the *fātiha* (Qur'anic verse) therefore became indicators of those who sought to follow the reformist path.[10] These apparently minor details have important implications since the adoption of Hanbalī rites could be interpreted as reflecting sympathy with the so-called 'Wahhabi' movement of Saudi Arabia, a puritanical movement founded by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1703–92) that rigorously upholds the concept of *tawlīd* (unity or oneness of God).[11] The employment of Hanbalī rites by Abdulhämid and by Abdureshid Qari, another reformist cleric in Ürümchi, together with their intolerance for religious practices that have no scripturalist foundation partly accounts for the label 'Wahhabi' being applied to these clerics by many Uyghurs including other religious leaders who do not share their reformist zeal.[12] Abdulhämid also discouraged undue reverence for elders which was traditionally reflected in the way believers organized themselves in a mosque: elders would be in front with younger members behind (Waite, 2003: 107). Abdulhämid made a point of dismissing this hierarchy based on age and instead stressed the egalitarian ethic underpinnings of Islamic orthodoxy (that is the equality of all believers before God). Another radical innovation was Abdulhämid's declaration that the wearing of headgear to the mosque was not an essential scripturalist requirement. Prior to this time, the wearing of headgear, whether a cap (*shäpkä*) or skull-cap (*dop pa*) was regarded as an essential aspect of Muslim practice and a key indicator of belief (Waite, 2003: 108).

In his sermons, Abdulhämid made a point of stressing the compatibility of Islam with learning and modern developments in general. In a style reminiscent of the pre-1949 reformists, he established a school in the centre of Qäshqär in 1988, on the basis of donations from local businessman, which ran part-time classes in foreign languages. Abdulhämid's mosque gained huge popularity, particularly among younger Uyghurs in the city centre of Qäshqär: during prayer time, a vast crowd of believers would over-flow into the street.

In November 1997, the government dismissed Abdulhämid from his post as *molla* at the Toqquz Tash mosque. This followed the closure of his school during the previous year. Many in Qäshqär explained Abdulhämid's dismissal on the basis that he had simply become too popular and that his stress on a combination of religious piety and educational development had come to be regarded as subversive by local authorities. According to the Eastern Turkistan Information Centre (ETIC), the dismissal was prompted by a sermon that Abdulhämid made in which he announced that:

10 See Glassé (1991: 345–9) for a description of differences in prayer according to the juridical schools.

11 The term 'Wahhabi' has become synonymous with 'religious extremism' and 'militant Islam' in Muslim societies. However, a recent study (DeLong-Bas, 2004), based on research into the original teachings of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, challenges current assumptions about the militancy of the founder of this movement.

12 According to Babadzhanov (2002: 312), the labels 'Wahhabi' and 'Hanafī' have been used as categories to identify those of a reformist or traditionalist disposition in Uzbekistan. In the case of Uzbekistan, the term Mujaddidiya (from the Arabic for 'renewal' or 'reform') is used as self-identification rather than 'Wahhabi'.

> In the past, oppressive rulers deprived the Uyghur people of education and science, economic and technical progress, and kept the people in ignorance and superstitions. The only way out for the Uyghurs from the present grim situation is education, and everyone should do his best to promote it (Eastern Turkistan Information Centre, 11 October 1997).

Since 1997, Abdulhämid has not been permitted to undertake a leading role in religious activities, although he remains an immensely respected and well-known figure. Since Abdulhämid's dismissal there is no religious figure who can be identified as leading the impetus towards Muslim reformism in Qäshqär.

Instead, there exists a highly informal spread of Muslim orthodox ideas through individuals who have been labelled as 'Wahhabi' by the Uyghur populace.[13] The term 'Wahhabi', which appears to have entered popular Uyghur usage in the last ten years, often carries associations of religious dogmatism or extremism.[14] Another term that is sometimes used by reformist Muslims as a self-identification is *sünnätchi* (that is those who follow the practice of the Prophet Muhammad) although this term is not employed in popular discourse. One important channel for the dissemination of Muslim orthodoxy is through a discursive form of proselytizing (*täbligh*) based on the use of *näsihät* [advice; admonition], which is extremely informal in nature due to political bans on meeting outside the mosque together with government persecution of reformist Muslims. A 21-year-old carpet-seller with strong sympathies for those aspiring towards orthodoxy described their techniques as follows:

> If a young man does not go to mosque they will go up to that person and encourage him to follow an Islamic lifestyle. If he is arguing or using bad language they will approach him and encourage him to be more polite (Interview 25 July 2003).

In this context, the perception of a misdeed can act as a hook on which to hang religious persuasion. The means of persuasion often relies on a series of gentle questions (e.g. Do you believe in God? What will happen to you after you die?), which are aimed at guiding the individual in question towards a more religious and morally informed lifestyle. This type of proselytizing can happen in a variety of contexts: for example the street, workplace and even nightclubs where prostitutes are targeted. Reformist Muslims have been known to engage in *täbligh* on Uyghur language websites although this is now increasingly difficult owing to recent government controls on the internet.[15]

In their quest to follow more closely the teachings of the Qur'an and practice of the Prophet, reformist Muslims have questioned a variety of local Islamic

13 See also Gladney (2004: 257) who refers to the term 'Wahhabi' as being 'a euphemism in the region for strict Muslims not an organized Islamic school'.

14 The term has similar associations in other Muslim societies including Uzbekistan (Babadzhanov, 2002: 308).

15 In the summer of 2003 I encountered relatively free access to internet cafés in Qäshqär and elsewhere in Xinjiang. In 2004, access was restricted to those who had applied for permits. Several individuals told me that the authorities were monitoring internet sites more rigorously. See Gladney (2004: 238–59) for a survey of Uyghur internet sources, although this does not include Uyghur language websites.

practices that were first challenged by Abdulhämid. In keeping with this quest for orthodoxy is a tendency to favour Arabic over Uyghur names: so for example Muhammad Imin rather than Mähmät Imin.[16] The growth of Muslim reformism has also been accompanied by an increase in veiling among women. Traditionally, only a relatively small minority of women in Qäshqär, usually middle-aged and older, would wear the famous brown veil (*romal*). Now a far wider range of veils are evident and this is particularly pronounced among younger women. These reformist developments are not confined to Qäshqär but are occurring throughout Xinjiang and are particularly evident in Ürümchi which is perhaps somewhat paradoxical given that the inhabitants of this city are frequently described in Uyghur popular discourse as being less influenced by Islam. Owing to greater religious freedom in this city, many reformist Muslims from throughout the province have congregated in Ürümchi, thereby challenging the traditional distinction in popular discourse between 'religion being strong in the south and weak in the north'.

Popular attitudes towards the reformist Muslims vary. Äkbär, a waiter at a restaurant described them as follows:

> Now there are many Wahhabi people in Qäshqär including some of my friends. They describe themselves as sünnätchi... they look for precedents for everything in the Qur'an and Hadīth. They even told me that I should not sell coca-cola. They keep their wives secluded – like in a cage (Interview 19 July 2003).

A retired college lecturer, who had become religious in his old age, gave a more positive appraisal when I asked him about the term 'Wahhabi'.

> They are like the *Jädid* but have been labelled Wahhabi. People like Ablimät Damolla (i.e. Abdulhämid) are called Wahhabi but they are just good Muslims who believe in reform (*islahat*) and progress (*täräqqiyat*) (Interview 24 July 2003).

The growth of reformist Muslim ideologies lays the potential for increased religious debate and conflict. Indeed, one of the criticisms levelled against the so-called 'Wahhabi' by the official clergy is precisely that they sow religious discord. The specific timing of prayers provides a particularly stark example. During the 1990s, clusters of Uyghurs chose to follow the orthodox Muslim practice of praying exactly according to the position of the sun – this meant that the time of their prayer would change slightly from day to day in contrast to the officially sanctioned time for prayer at the mosque that would be altered on a less frequent basis. In November 1997 one of the senior imams at Qäshqär's Heytgah mosque went as far as locking a group of young Uyghurs, who had undertaken evening prayers (*sham namaz*) at a different time to the rest of the mosque congregation, into the mosque itself before calling the police.[17]

16 This 'Arabization' accounts for Abdulhämid having two versions of his name: Ablimät the Uyghur, and Abdulhämid the Arabic version.

17 This incident was also referred to on the internet by the Eastern Turkestan Information Centre (see ETIC 13 November 1997), although this particular source attributes the conflict to an unwillingness on the part of the Uyghurs involved to pray behind a 'red *molla*' (that is who was supportive of the government) and no reference is made to the underlying doctrinal dispute.

The impetus towards Muslim orthodoxy can partly be attributed to Xinjiang's opening up to ties with other Muslim societies, as is noticeable in the case of Abdulhämid's exposure to new ideas in the Middle East. The process of proselytizing described above (the employment of groups of believers to steer others towards more pious forms of Muslim conduct) bears the traits of the Tablighi Jama'at which is known to have operated in Xinjiang in the past.[18] Launched in Delhi in 1926 by Muhammad Ilyas, the Tablighi Jama'at is now the largest Muslim missionary group in the world and is characterized by quieter, non-political means of proselytizing.[19]

It is important to see this impetus towards Muslim orthodoxy in the context of greater access to the scripturalist traditions of Islam; there is now a range of religious literature available in bookshops including translations of the Hadīth and commentaries on the Qur'an.[20] The case of Abdurähim, a farmer in the north of Qäshqär provides just one example. Previously, reliant on the local *molla* for religious guidance, in 2003 he was engaged in a process of self-education, learning the Qur'an and reading a variety of religious books for two hours a day. As he put it:

> When you first came here, I didn't know much about religion. I just recited a few verses from the Qur'an. Now I have started to read these books and know much more. You see for a long time we didn't have religious books. Mollas and other religious leaders could recite from the Qur'an but they couldn't really understand it. Now there are many more knowledgeable people in Qäshqär (Interview 10 July 2003).

The emergence of terms like '*sünnätchi*' and 'Wahhabi' is just one aspect of a wider development whereby Muslims in Qäshqär and elsewhere in Xinjiang are beginning to reengage with Islamic scripturalist traditions in a way that was previously much more difficult.[21]

The Reformist Challenge to *Näzir* and Other 'Local' Religious Practices

Reformist Muslims have begun to question a range of religious practices which they claim to have no grounding in the scripturalist traditions of Islam, including the undertaking of feasts organized to commemorate the dead (*näzir*), regular attendance at the cemetery to pray on behalf of the deceased and the celebration of *Barat*. The following section focuses on the reformist challenge to *näzir* in particular.

18 In 1997, a Pakistani foreign minister acknowledged that the Tablighi Jama'at had been running missions in Xinjiang from their base in Lahore (AFP Islamabad, 13 February 1997).

19 For an analysis of the Tablighi Jama'at's conversion methods in the US and Europe, see Metcalf (1996).

20 Examples of texts on Islam that are available in state bookshops throughout Xinjiang include Sabit (ed.) (1999); Imin (2001); Äkbär et al. (2002); and Yang Chichen (ed.) (2000).

21 This process of reengagement is of course extremely complex and uneven given political restrictions on religion that particularly affect state employees. These issues, though, take one outside the specific parameters of this chapter.

The *näzir* is held on the third, seventh and fortieth days and finally one year after the person has died. Another smaller *näzir*, referred to as *azna shemi*, is held every Thursday evening within the 40-day period following death. Only one or two local mosques will normally be invited to the *azna shemi* and third day *näzir*. However the entire *jamaät* (that is the mosque community of the Friday Mosque and associated smaller mosques) will be invited to the seventh, fortieth and 1 year *näzir*. The fortieth day *näzir* usually takes on the greatest significance since it marks the end of the official mourning period.[22]

The mosque communities walk to the bereaved household after morning prayers, with the *molla* and other religious leaders (*qari*) leading the procession. They are then guided to the guestroom(s) (*mehmankhana*) of the household, and seat themselves broadly according to religious authority and age, with the *molla* occupying the seat of honour (*tör*) whereupon they are presented with *polu* (pilau or *plov* as it is known elsewhere in Central Asia), which is eaten fast and largely in silence.[23] The imam then provides a recital from the Qur'an which normally includes the *sürä yasin*, a passage associated by Uyghurs and other Muslims with the after-life (Glassé, 1991: 424). The assembled then make a petition for forgiveness of the individual's sins and pray that his soul may enter Paradise. For the women attending in the afternoon a *büvüm* (a woman who possesses religious knowledge) recites the Qur'an. All the women in the neighbourhood (who are invited by way of an invitation card) take gifts to the *näzir* in the form of cooked food, bread and fabric (Bellér-Hann, 2001: 15).

One very important aspect of the *näzir* is that it is a *sawab* [meritorious deed] which will benefit the deceased in the after-world. All *sawabs* undertaken by the relatives in the *näzir* period have the same effect as if the dead person himself had undertaken them. Thus, while the relatives organize the *näzir* and will also gain some religious merit for themselves, the *sawab* counts primarily in favour of the deceased. Similarly, the mosque community's prayer at the cemetery and at the donation of alms counts as a *sawab* that directly favours the spirit.

An important feature of *näzir* is the communication with the spirit of the deceased. In the course of interviews, the *näzir* was frequently described as an opportunity for the spirit to meet up again with his or her *yurt* (home/community of origin; Waite, 2003: 155). The concept of *yagh puritish* [making the oil fragrant] underpins the communicative aspects of the *näzir*: the spirit is nourished by the smell of oil cooking in the *qazan* [cauldron] and is believed to be happy at the sight of the gathering of relatives, neighbours and friends.[24] The process of undertaking a *dua* [prayer] at the end of the *näzir* was likened to sending a letter to the deceased. Another form of communication with the deceased used to include the practice of hanging a light

22 On the *näzir* among the Uyghurs see Rakhman et al. (1996: 133–5); Häbibulla (2000: 316–35).

23 This summary of *näzir* is derived from my PhD thesis (Waite, 2003: 154–7) and refers to *näzir* conducted in the rural areas of Qäshqär.

24 On the concept of *yagh puritish* among the Uyghurs see Bellér-Hann (2001: 20–23) See also Privratsky (2001: 128, 136) who outlines the concept of the spirit 'feeding' on the aroma of the oil in Kazakhstan.

outside the house of the deceased for 40 days. This was accompanied by the belief that the spirit will be returning to the house on frequent occasions during the *näzir* period; the light was there to guide it (Osman, 1985: 14).

During the course of fieldwork conducted in the rural neighbourhoods of Qäshqär in 1993–94, it was clear that all households would feel compelled to undertake *näzir* in the event of bereavement, based on a mixture of community pressure and loyalty to the dead person. I was sometimes told that if poor people were to organize a *näzir* this would not constitute a *sawab* since it would inevitably create financial difficulties for the family of the deceased. The view was also expressed that the nature of the *sawab* was dependent on the relative resources of the household; it was quite acceptable for a poorer household to just invite the local mosque whereas for a richer household there was a perceived compulsory obligation to invite the wider neighbourhood (that is members of the Friday mosque and associated mosques). However, in practice this reasoning would often be contradicted, such was the importance attached to these events. One family for example were already in debt but nonetheless decided to undertake full-scale *näzirs*, the cost of which amounted to a total of 8,000 yuan. In this particular case, the person who had died (a carpet trader in his mid-30s) was highly thought of in the neighbourhood (*mähällä*) and his family felt that a large *näzir* must be given to correspond with his status in the community. Perpetuating and developing the social status of the household is a very important motivating factor behind the *näzir*. Rich people will often transport the entire mosque community from Qäshqär's central mosque. This not only adds to the *sawab* of the event but also endows greater prestige on the name of the deceased.

At the time of my initial fieldwork in Qäshqär in 1993–94, Abdulhämid was the only religious leader to question the validity of *näzir*, arguing that there was no Qur'anic justification for undertaking the series of *näzir* and praying repeatedly for forgiveness. As one teacher put it, looking back at that time:

> He has had a very strong influence amongst Uyghurs... He had the courage to stand up and tell people that things like *näzir* were not part of Islam. Other people were too frightened to do this (Interview 27 July 2004).

Initially, though, Abdulhämid remained something of a lone voice: indeed those in the rural neighbourhoods, where I conducted my fieldwork, saw *näzir* as an essential aspect of Islamic practice.

More recently, many *mollas* have begun to play down the significance of *näzir*, emphasizing that it is not an essential requirement of Islam. One relatively common pronouncement is that those who are reasonably well off can undertake the *näzir* but those that are poor should refrain. Both government authorities and clergy, under the direction of the China Islamic Association, have discouraged the holding of excessively lavish *näzir* that compound poverty and reflect social and economic differentiation.[25] It's also noticeable, and may be more than coincidence, that the

25 In August 1997, for example, Yusup Aisha, the Vice Chairman of the Xinjiang Regional Islamic Association declared that 'We must change old customs and habits, and insist on simple weddings and funerals'. 'Official Decries "Negative" Islamic Practices', Ürümchi Xinjiang Television Network, 16 August 1997. See also Bellér-Hann (2001: 19).

trend against *näzir* corresponds with the government's opposition towards religious gatherings that take place outside officially sanctioned sites such as the mosque.[26] In the course of interviews during recent visits to Qäshqär, all informants concurred that the prevalence of *näzir* had declined substantially. This has been accompanied by a decline in the public expression of mourning, known as *qariliq*, which would officially last for 40 days.[27]

Rather than merely down-playing the significance of *näzir*, reformist Muslims have expressed outright opposition. A man selling religious books near the Heytgah mosque who declared himself to be a *sünnätchi* told me the following:

> Apart from the Qur'an there are 6 main books written by al-Bukhārī and al-Hajjāj, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājā... *Näzir* is *haram* [forbidden]. When someone dies you must give *sädiqä* or *zakat* [ritual donations, e.g. to the poor]... If you invite lots of rich people and have a *näzir* this is helping rich people – this is not a *näzir*. You must give money to the poor or to the hospital (Interview 27 July 2003).

Another trader who attends a reformist mosque in Ürümchi declared that: 'This is a custom (*adät*) that comes from us. There is nothing in the Qur'an or Hadīth about *näzir*' (Interview 7 August 2004). The legitimacy of *näzir* is now being questioned on a large scale. Äkbär, the waiter mentioned above, stated:

> People realize now that there is no point in giving all these feasts – of just inviting people to eat lots of food. It is pointless, a waste of money. People realize that *näzir* means a good deed, a donation, but if you give lots of food to rich people this is not a donation. Also people understand that the Qur'an and Hadīth do not say anything about the *näzir* (Interview 19 July 2003).

Despite declarations that those who still undertake *näzir* are 'ignorant' (*bilimsiz*) or 'backward' (*qalaq*), one should not assume a unilineal path of decline or that those who practise *näzir* are inevitably less well versed in the scripturalist traditions. One of the most educated clerics in Häzrät, a rural neighbourhood in the north of Qäshqär, defended the *näzir* by referring to a Hadīth:

> When one of the Prophet's followers died, he asked advice from the Prophet Muhammad about what he should do now. The Prophet advised him to do something that would benefit people. So he made a lake to provide drinking water. Both rich and poor drank from the lake. Muhammad said, if you make people happy then that is a *näzir*. Now there is no shortage of water so we make *polu* for *näzir* for both the rich and the poor (Interview 20 July 2003).

This is an interesting case of an individual defending a traditional practice by engaging with the scripturalist traditions. By drawing on the concept of *näzir* as being a good deed, the cleric was able to reconcile a 'local' religious practice with the 'universalistic' principles of Islam (Eickelman, 1982). It therefore serves as a caution against assuming a simple deficiency model whereby local practices without a clear-cut scripturalist sanction will inevitably decline as people gain greater access to religious knowledge. The work of Bowen in Indonesia is relevant in this respect in demonstrating the complex negotiations of 'modernist' and 'traditionalist' interpretations, with 'traditionalists' often engaging with scripturalist traditions to defend customary practices (Bowen, 1993: 25–30).

The other practices that have been the target of reformist criticism include the celebration of *Barat*, attendance at the cemetery to pray on behalf of the deceased and pilgrimages to the shrines (*mazar*) of holy figures.[28] Reformist Muslims argue that the celebration of *Barat* has no justification either in the Qur'an or Hadīth. The burning of oil as a way of communicating with the deceased is dismissed as being merely superstitious (*khurapi*).[29] Regular attendance at the cemetery to pray on behalf of the deceased is also criticized on the basis of over-stating the individual's capacity to influence the afterlife.[30] As in the case of Muslim societies elsewhere, ritual veneration of holy figures is condemned as being in contradiction with the unity and omnipotence of God.

Conclusion

The emergence of the word 'Wahhabi' in Uyghur popular discourse, a term that was not widely employed until the mid-1990s, is itself reflective of an increasing engagement with and debate about what constitutes Muslim orthodoxy in Xinjiang that has followed the opening up of the region to trans-national Muslim influences in the reform era. As the term 'Wahhabi' also serves to distil a range of negative associations – such as extremism and dogmatism – among those Uyghurs who may follow a more secular disposition, it is also indicative of an ongoing debate about the role of religion in contemporary society. These discussions and debates are taking place throughout Muslim societies but are enacted in Xinjiang in the context of a state that continues to adopt a coercive approach to religion. While the ending of decades of isolation together with the re-emergence of Xinjiang as a vital crossroads of international trade, has major implications for religious knowledge and authority in

26 As mentioned above, the imposition of the 'Strike Hard' campaign in 1996, with its renewal in 1997, marked a new level of intolerance of religious ritual that takes place outside officially sanctioned sites.

27 As part of the process of *qariliq*, men will refrain from shaving and will not cut their hair. Over their dark clothes (e.g. a black *chapan* or coat), men are expected to wear a white band along their waist and preferably a white turban, the latter being especially evident at the time the body is taken to the graveyard. Women similarly wear a white band around their waist as well as a white headscarf. In both cases men and women are supposed to keep a sad disposition and refrain from going to *toy* events.

People would refrain from economic activity for at least part of the *qariliq*. This may coincide with the 40 day *näzir* period but will often be renounced before this time on the basis of economic necessity.

28 There is a strong tradition of saint veneration in Eastern *Turkestan/Xinjiang*. See Zarcone (1999, 2002); Harris and Dawut (2002).

29 For details of *Barat* and associated rituals, see Rakhman et al. (1996: 183); Häbibulla (2000: 343–5); Bellér-Hann (2001); Waite (2003: 119–25, 162–5).

30 Most mosque communities would traditionally visit the cemetery each week (Waite, 2003: 165–7).

the region, the growth of reformism is still impeded by the structural features within socialist rule: namely the secular appropriation of the modern education system and print and electronic media together with extreme scepticism and intolerance of any religious development that takes place outside the channels of state-sanctioned religion.

In this context, the impact of reformist ideologies are both restricted and channelled by the political contours of the state. The arrest and dismissal of Abdulhämid reflects the political obstacles against those who embark on a project of reform and proselytizing. In the context of northern Xinjiang, the government authorities' intolerance of the revival of the *mäshräp* provides another example of how the political system serves to stifle religious innovation and buttress existing patterns of religious authority. Consisting of ritualized meetings of young Uyghur males of the same age cohort, which include among their multiple functions the goal of mediating new forms of religious socialization and the inculcation of Islamic norms, the institution of *mäshräp* spread rapidly throughout Ghulja in 1994 and then to the Almaty region of Kazakhstan, before facing a clampdown from state authorities first in August 1995 and then again February 1997 (Roberts, 1998). More recently, reformist Muslims in Qäshqär have been subjected to extreme persecution in a context of increased control of religion, especially in the post-September 11 era.

Yet, at the same time the interests of reformist Muslims and the state can occasionally coincide. It is noticeable that the almost dramatic shift in attitudes towards *näzir* in recent years rests on the coincidental convergence of state interests towards discouraging ritual activity outside the mosque (as well as excessive expenditure on feasts) with a reformist impetus towards criticizing religious practices without a clear-cut scripturalist legitimation. The same unlikely alliance operates against Sufi practices associated with visits to tombs: state efforts to restrict and manage ritual activity around these sacred sites have corresponded with reformist critiques.[31]

The growth of Muslim reformism has an interesting and complex implication for the theme of Uyghurs' positioning between a Central Asian and Chinese context. Muslim reformists pose a challenge to a range of religious practices that are a feature of Qäshqär and other parts of Xinjiang but which also have parallels with practices in Central Asia. The holding of memorial feasts, the practice of burning oil as a way of communicating with the deceased, attendance at tombs and other such practices are common to groups in Xinjiang and other parts of Central Asia more generally. Such practices are now being contested across the Xinjiang region, based on a striving towards what is perceived as a purer version of Islam.[32] As argued above, one should

31 According to Harris and Dawut (2002: 115), Xinjiang newspapers reported in 1999 that 'Wahhabis' had burned down a shrine in Qäshqär where women went to pray for children. One of the authors of this article, Rahilä Dawut, also encountered a woman at the Imam Asim *mazar* festival in 2000 attempting to persuade a group of pilgrims that *mazar* worship was against the correct principles of Islam.

32 Babadzhanov (1999) and (2002) provides the most comprehensive account so far of reformist developments in Central Asia. Nevertheless, ethnographic studies of the disputes that are currently taking place over local religious practices in Central Asia are, to the best of my knowledge, currently lacking in the secondary literature on the region.

be wary of assuming that 'popular' or 'local' religious practices are destined to decline once an area is subjected to global efforts to achieve a more 'pure' understanding of Islam grounded strictly in the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet Muhammad. Yet, one can safely predict that any relaxation in the current political climate, together with the increasing significance of Xinjiang as a crossroads of international trade (and the consequent growth of trans-national influences), is likely to broaden the channels for the dissemination of reformist ideologies, leading to increased debate and negotiation over what constitutes legitimate Muslim conduct.

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PART 4
Negotiation of Multiple and Hybrid Uyghur Identities

Chapter 10

Polo, Läghmän, So Säy: Situating Uyghur Food Between Central Asia and China

M. Cristina Cesàro

Introduction

A few days before returning to England I went to see Bahargül.[1] Her husband Dilshat, a social scientist himself, was also there. He had just returned from two months' fieldwork in the Tarim basin and his advice for my research was: 'If you want to know traditional Uyghur food, you should go to Southern Xinjiang. In fact, even Uyghurs themselves don't know what their traditional food is. For instance, *män pär*, the dough in *suyuq ash*, comes from the Chinese *mian pian*. But you can't say that to a Uyghur [...]'. 'And what about *sangza*? They are originally Hui' added Bahargül. 'Han', corrected her husband. 'No, they're Hui' insisted Bahargül. 'After all it's the same', said Dilshat, 'how many years of history have the Han? More than 5000. And how many have the Hui? Only a few hundred', implying that, for many Uyghurs, there is not such a big difference between the Han Chinese and the Hui (Chinese Muslims).[2]

It was too late to follow Dilshat's advice, since that was the end of my fieldwork, and I tried to explain that I found equally interesting what I had observed in Ürümchi. However, I was grateful for his remark, since it encapsulates a number of questions that I shall address in this chapter. He had renewed my awareness of the meaning of 'traditional Uyghur food' and the implications of its definition. First of all, whose definition? That of a Chinese-trained Uyghur academic – twice authoritative, as a Uyghur and as an academic – or that of the 'common Uyghur'? Moreover, in Dilshat's advice was implicit the assumption that when studying Uyghur – or any other people's – food one should be concerned with 'traditional' food, a long history being the hallmark of tradition (on this see also Rakhman, Hämdulla and Khushtar,

1 This chapter is largely based on Chapter 6 of my PhD thesis (Cesàro, 2002). Fieldwork for this thesis was conducted in Xinjiang, mainly among urban educated Uyghurs in Ürümchi, from May 1996 to September 1997. In order to protect people's identity, all respondents' names occurring in this chapter are fictional.

2 *Suyuq ash* (literally 'watery food') is a meat and vegetable soup with little squares of dough in it. *Mian pian* means 'dough square(s)', while *sangza*, a sort of fried noodles arranged in a spiral, mark the holidays of *Roza* [*heyit*] (end of Ramadan) and *Qurban* [*heyit*] (Sacrifice) and are prepared in every Uyghur household during that time.

1996: 26, quoting Qäshqäri). This reflected a certain Chinese essentializing discourse on the appropriate object of ethnographic research, especially when dealing with minorities, who are usually seen as more 'traditional' than the 'modern' Han – an approach that was common among anthropologists in general until recently. At the same time, by situating tradition in a relatively remote southern Xinjiang, he was also saying something about Ürümchi, implying that eating habits in the capital, where the majority of the population is Han, were not as 'purely Uyghur'.[3] He further problematized this not only by pointing out the 'foreign' influences in foods generally regarded as traditionally Uyghur, but also by suggesting that this knowledge may challenge their traditional nature.

In fact, the practices and discourses that I had observed and recorded during my fieldwork were rather complex and could not be simply pigeon-holed as 'traditional' / 'non-traditional', or 'Uyghur' / 'non-Uyghur'. The boundaries of a cuisine, like those of an ethnic group, are not static but constantly shifting and undergoing a process of redefinition. What follows is an attempt to make sense of these complexities, while preserving as far as possible the nuances that are part of everyday lived experience. I will first address the general question of what is a cuisine, and consider whether we can talk of a Uyghur cuisine. I will then focus on some 'traditional' Uyghur dishes; in particular, I wish to highlight the dynamic aspect of food traditions by situating these dishes in a broader historical and geographical context. This will also provide an opportunity to underscore continuities with other parts of Central Asia – and more in general with the Turkic-Persian world. Finally, I will explore more recent developments in contemporary Uyghur food practices, which point in particular to Han influence.

While the aim of this chapter is to underline the hybridity of Uyghur food and, more in general, to define a cuisine as a dynamic process rather than a static corpus of dishes and recipes, I will also argue that there is a strong sense among the Uyghurs of having a distinctive cuisine, particularly *vis-à-vis* the Han Chinese. This is not a contradiction; in fact, what makes Uyghur food distinctive is precisely the unique combination of Central Asian and Chinese culinary cultures.[4]

Uyghur Cuisine: The Food of a Community

'Cuisine' is a French word whose literal meaning of 'kitchen' extends metonymically to that of 'cooking'. It is used in English to refer to a style or method of cooking, usually of a particular country or region – as in French or Middle Eastern cuisine – or establishment – as in haute cuisine. While there is no question of the empirical

3 'On 'pure Uyghurs' and 'backward and authentic southern oases' cf. Cesàro (2002: 66–70).

4 Besides the actual foodstuff, which is the focus of this chapter, there are a number of other elements which are relevant in defining Uyghur food culture. These include above all food taboos and dietary rules derived from religious belief, as well as other social and cultural aspects relating to food, such as, for instance, rules of hospitality and commensality (cf. Cesàro, 2000, 2002). Here I do not discuss these in detail as it would be far beyond the scope of this chapter.

use of this term, especially in popular discourse, it is worthwhile considering its meaning when used as an analytic category in scholarly writing. According to Mintz (1996), what makes a cuisine is not only a set of dishes or cooking methods, but the existence of a community of people who eat those foods and, more importantly, have feelings about them.

> In spite of the variability of individual differences in [food attitudes], there is a point in trying to link people's feelings about food in some one particular culture with the foods that people in that society customarily eat – what gets called, more or less imprecisely, its "cuisine". (...)
>
> [A] cuisine requires a population that eats that cuisine with sufficient frequency to consider themselves experts on it. They all believe, and *care* that they believe, that they know what it consists of, how it is made, and how it should taste. In short, a genuine cuisine has common social roots; it is the food of a community – albeit often a very large community (Mintz, 1996: 94–6).

Leaving aside the question of what a national cuisine is, and how to make one (for this, see Appadurai, 1988), here I intend to focus on the links between a community and its food. Like ethnic consciousness, a cuisine is defined both by a process of identification – of a community with its food – and, simultaneously, by one of differentiation – in opposition to other cuisines. Regardless of its actual content, which is subject to constant change, what matters is that people *believe* that they know what their cuisine consists of, how it is made, and how it should taste. An episode which occurred a few years ago provides a good illustration of this.

At the end of January 1999 the city authorities in Beijing evacuated and demolished what had become known as the 'Uyghur Village' (*Weigongcun*), in the north-west district of Ganjiakou. The 'Village' had developed since the mid-1980s, when Uyghur migrants from Xinjiang started a number of catering businesses there, mainly aimed at visitors from that region who stayed in the nearby Xinjiang Centre (Xinjiang *Banshichu*).[5] Within a decade, the road, lined with restaurants, bakeries, and kebab stalls, had become the centre of a lively Uyghur community, attracting not only Uyghur residents and visitors but also a large number of Chinese and foreigners who went there to experience Uyghur cuisine (on this see also Zhuang, 2002). Sadly, the year 1999 brought bad news for the Uyghur Village: the owners and workers of more than 30 Uyghur restaurants there were ordered to leave their establishments by the end of January. According to a Beijing city official, the reason for the order was 'to repair the road which runs through the village'.[6]

Food can have an evocative power, helping to recall or recreate a homely atmosphere. Here I want to consider the aspects of a 'cuisine' that I have outlined above, that is, the link between a community and its food and the sense of belonging inspired and enhanced by this food. To illustrate this, I reproduce the words of a Uyghur émigré living in the United States. His 'Tribute to the Ganjiakou Uyghur Village' was sparked by the news of its demolition.

5 The Xinjiang Centre is the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) representative office in Beijing. It comprises three buildings, one of which is a guesthouse.

6 From an AFP report posted to the Uighur-l mailing list on 28 January 1999.

I feel very sad at the recent news that Beijing City authorities have begun demolishing the Uyghur village in Beijing's Ganjiakou district. One of the best memories of my college years in Beijing is going out for dinner with my friends at the Uyghur restaurants in the Xinjiang Village which is just a couple of blocks away from the school. It had been a place for me to fight the homesickness at the weekends and holidays.

When I first went to Beijing in 1983, there was only one Muslim restaurant in the entire Beijing city. The state owned restaurant had only beef dumplings. Short after I arrived in Beijing, I went to that restaurant with several friends to take a break from the Chinese food at the school cafeteria. We had to wait for 4 hours on line to get the food. Uyghurs are very conservative about food, we are very reluctant to try new tastes. It was very hard for me to get used to the Chinese food at school [...] At the second year of my college, some Uyghurs, mostly farmers from the Eastern Turkistan [Xinjiang] countrysides began to come to Beijing in search of a better way of making money. They had quickly made the Uyghur kebab a household name in Beijing. Soon after, Beijing people began to call every Uyghur person a "lamb kebab", some innocently, some to ridicule us. I witnessed many conflicts caused by this nick name. Selling kebab turned out to be a good business in Beijing and other Chinese cities [...]

As the Uyghur population increased, several Uyghur restaurants were opened to serve the increasing Uyghur population. Those restaurants immediately became the favourite hangouts for Uyghur students, businessmen and government officials on business trips [...] As result, Uyghur restaurants spread all over the city. But a little street named Ganjiakou boasted the most restaurants because of its proximity to Xinjiang Center where most of the Uyghur visitors stay. Beijing people began to call the street "Xinjiang Village" or "Uyghur Village". After a long day work, Uyghur merchants, shish kebab sellers and other businessmen would come to the village to have dinner and hangout with other Uyghurs. For them, it became a place to feel at home in a foreign land 2,000 miles away from home.

I left Beijing in 1989 after my graduation from the college. Five years later, I stopped by in Beijing on my way to the United States. While I was waiting for visa, I stayed in Xinjiang Center and ate in the Xinjiang Village. I also spent the Kurban heit [*Qurban heyit*-festival] (the biggest Muslim holiday) there [...] Last time when I was in Beijing it was December 1995. I stayed in Beijing over night. As I walked into the village to have a lagman [*läghmän*] (my favorite Uyghur dish), I had a warm coming-home feeling. After the restaurant owner found out I just came from United States where I was a graduate student, he insisted to treat me free. I kindly refused his offer, but the warm feeling stayed long after the delicious lagman [*läghmän*] was digested [...] Now the place where many Uyghurs found prosperity and peace will be gone [...] Without the Uyghur village, Beijing will be a very different place for me. I am sure all Uyghurs who have visited Beijing will share my feelings.[7]

A number of themes that are relevant to our discussion of Uyghur cuisine can be singled out from this passage. First of all, Uyghur food is characterized in opposition to Chinese food. Moreover, specific items (e.g. *läghmän*) can be read as signature dishes – that is, dishes that are considered characteristic of a given cuisine from an emic perspective – or function as ethnic markers (e.g. kebab) – meaning that they are used by outsiders to define metonymically a given group. What emerges

7 This message was posted to the Uighur-l mailing list on 1 February 1999. I have chosen to reproduce the original text with only minor editing, leaving the English uncorrected.

even more strongly though, is the sense of a community which unites around food, both physically and metaphorically. These feelings are clearly heightened by the somewhat displaced status of most Uyghurs in Beijing, who feel themselves 'in a foreign land 2,000 miles away from home'. While this is, in a sense, an extreme case, it helps to set the scene and begin to understand how Uyghur people feel about their food and identify with it. In other words, this account exemplifies that emotional link between a community and its food, which we have identified as a fundamental dimension of a cuisine.

The evocative and personal nature of this account can be contrasted with the analytic approach adopted by some Uyghur academics 2,000 miles west of Beijing, back 'at home'. While here too the link between a community and its food is established, the focus is rather on the material aspects of a cuisine and on its content:

> Eating and drinking habits are a constituent part of a people's culture and are reflected in people's daily lives, as a result of the development of certain productive forces. During their long history, on the basis of their eating habits and of their climatic and living conditions, Uyghur people have created a rich culinary art and a variety of traditional foods suitable for the peculiarities of their lives. Uyghur people have always given great attention to the art of cooking, to hygiene, and to taste in food. There are many kinds of Uyghur food, among these meat- and starch-based foods play a prominent role in the Uyghur diet. In his 'Compendium of Turkic Dialects' Mähmut Qäshqäri describes a number of ancient traditional Uyghur foods (Rakhman, Hämdulla and Khushtar, 1996: 26, author's translation).

Thus starts the chapter devoted to 'Uyghur eating and drinking habits' in the book *Uyghur örp-adätliri* [Uyghur Customs].[8] The chapter includes 36 entries devoted to 'traditional' (*än'äniwi*) Uyghur foods, ranging from *nan* [bread] to *polo* [the name of a dish] and *murabba* [fruit preserve]. Besides a detailed description of ingredients and methods of preparation, it also provides an accurate and in depth discussion of social and cultural aspects of food.

In the introduction to the chapter on Uyghur foods and drinks, the first concern of the authors is to establish a long history for Uyghur culinary art. This attitude was also implicit in Dilshat and Bahargül's comments, cited at the beginning of this chapter. Here evidence for such antiquity is produced by reporting a long list of foods that appear in what is considered a tenth-century Uyghur 'classic', Mähmut Qäshqäri [Mahmūd al-Kāshgharī]'s *Compendium of Turkic Dialects*. The list begins by describing a number of different kinds of *nan* [bread] and continues with all sorts of foods and drinks, mostly featuring grains and starchy foods, but also milk, yoghurt, meat, fresh and dried fruits, oil, honey, sugar, and rice. In fact, this long quote from Mähmut Qäshqäri's work also has the merit of helping to reconstruct the diet and cuisine of settled Turkic peoples ten centuries ago, Central Asian peoples who are supposedly the ancestors of, and certainly related to, the modern Uyghurs.

8 Sections on food are also found in *Uyghur folklori häqqidä bayan* [A Discussion of Uyghur Folklore] by the same Abdukerim Rakhman (1989: 182–215) and in *Uyghur etnografiyisi* [Uyghur Ethnography] by Abdurähim Häbibulla (1993: 113–50).

Before proceeding to describe in detail a large number of 'traditional' Uyghur dishes, the authors devote several pages to Uyghur beliefs and social values concerning food. For instance, they mention the practice of exchanging gifts of food among relatives, close friends, and neighbours. Moreover, they devote a section to each of the following: daily food at home, food for guests, food for religious holidays, healing with food, and dietetic food. Here, notions of hospitality and etiquette are discussed along with meal structures and folk dietetics. In other words, what defines Uyghur cuisine as distinctive is not just a set of dishes, but also a long-standing tradition and a number of social practices and values expressed in the domain of food.

'Traditional' Uyghur Food

What, then, is this food that many Uyghurs feel so strongly about? We have learnt that there are a large number of Uyghur dishes that are considered 'traditional'.[9] However, a detailed and exhaustive description of Uyghur food would be far beyond the scope of this chapter. Here I shall focus on some dishes that today are regarded as typically Uyghur – namely *polo*, *läghmän* and *kawap* – and attempt to contextualize them within a broader geographical and historical perspective.

In Xinjiang, *polo* is probably regarded as the most typical Uyghur dish by both Uyghurs and Han Chinese.[10] It is the food normally served to guests, or at weddings, funerals, and similar life cycle rituals. In Chinese it is called *zhuafan*, which can be translated as 'rice eaten with the fingers', a term which has a derogatory connotation, in line with the Han Chinese stereotype that views the Uyghurs as backward and uncivilized. This is by no means a useful way to describe *polo*, given that the custom of eating rice with the fingers was, and to some extent still is, widespread in Central Asia as well as in the Indian subcontinent. Moreover, many Uyghurs have in fact abandoned this habit and have introduced the use of a spoon. *Polo* is a rice dish of which there are a number of different versions, depending on the other ingredients. In the cookbook *Uyghur tamaqliri* [Uyghur Food] we find twenty-four different recipes for *polo* (Baqi, 1984). According to the most common version, carrots and mutton (or chicken) are first fried in abundant oil with onions in a *qazan*, a thick cast iron pan, then rice and water are added and the whole concoction is covered and steamed. Some like to add also raisins and dried apricots.

9 By 'dish' here I refer to all those foods that may constitute the main course in a meal.

10 According to books and dictionaries, the correct spelling and pronunciation is *polu* (Baqi, 1984; *Uyghur tilning* 1990; Rakhman et al., 1996). However, in restaurant menus I have always seen it spelled *polo*, which is how it is usually pronounced in standard spoken Uyghur.

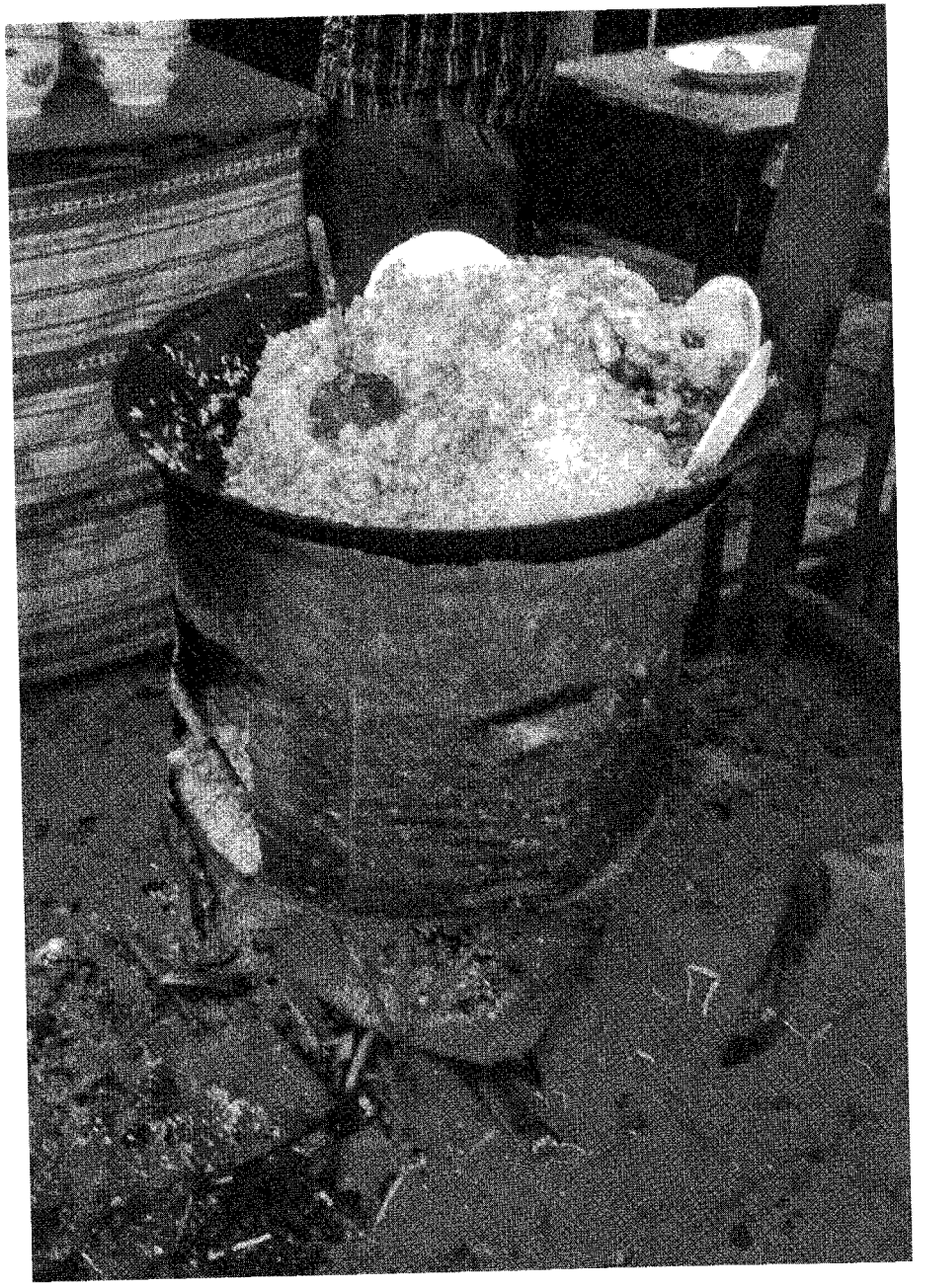

Figure 10.1 Selling *polo* at the Qäshqär [Kashgar] Sunday Market
Photo by M. Cristina Cesàro, 1997

In fact, *polo* can be said to be a truly Central Asian dish, as it is found throughout Central Asia (*polau*, *plof*, *ash*, etc). Not surprisingly, it is particularly popular among Uzbeks, the Central Asian Turkic group which is culturally and linguistically closest to the Uyghurs. In Iran we find *polow*, which is evidently related to the Uyghur *polo*. Iranian *polow* is prepared by mixing tasty ingredients with boiled rice and steaming everything together. According to Fragner (1994), the use of rice possibly spread from China to Central Asia during the Mongol conquest (thirteenth century) and may subsequently have been brought to Iran by migrating Turks.[11]

Thus, the dish which Uyghurs today consider their most representative dish, laden with symbolic meaning for identity, hospitality, and ritual purposes, is found, in a more or less similar version, in most of Central Asia and, in a different version, in Iran.[12] Far from being a paradox, this fact highlights the Central Asian character of the modern Uyghur; at the same time, it does not undermine the distinctiveness of Uyghur cuisine. In her discussion of Jewish food in the Middle East, Roden (1994) mentions a number of foods and dishes which are not exclusively Jewish but are shared by most Middle Eastern people. However, she concludes that '[b]ecause these dishes have such a powerful hold on the emotions of Jews, are so much part of their ancestral memories and so tied to their culture and identity, I believe that they should be considered Jewish.' (1994, 158). If we adopt this premise, we can then talk of *polo* as a Uyghur dish, in as much as Uyghurs *believe* it is distinctive of their cuisine.

If *polo* is considered the most representative Uyghur dish, that which is normally served to an invited guest, *läghmän* (or *längmän*) are the most common ordinary food among the Uyghurs.[13] These are hand-pulled noodles made with wheat flour, boiled and eaten with *säy* (a corruption of the Chinese *cai*), a stir-fried topping usually made with tomatoes, onions, green peppers, mutton, and other vegetables. While today in Xinjiang and in the Central Asian Republics *läghmän* is a dish usually associated with the Uyghurs – to the extent that, for instance, in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan they are referred to as 'Uyghur *läghmän*' – in fact these noodles are probably of Chinese or Hui (Chinese Muslim) origin. According to Ablikim, a Uyghur linguist, the phonetic structure of the word itself suggests that it is a loan-word, as no Turkic word in the

11 On food and culinary exchange during Mongol rule (thirteenth – fourteenth century) see Buell (1999); Buell and Anderson (2000), Sabban (2002). These authors have contrasting views on the degree of *Arab/Muslim* influence (through Turkic oasis dwellers) vs. Chinese influence on Mongol foodways.

12 Interestingly, in Afghanistan two separate traditions of *polau* seem to coexist, the Turkic version – basically the same as Uyghur *polo* – being popular among Turkic-speaking Turkmens and Uzbeks, while the Iranian '*polow*' version is common among Persian-speaking Tajiks and Pashtuns.

13 According to dictionaries, '*längmän*' is the correct spelling and pronunciation (*Uyghur tilning* 1994; Osmanof, 1997); however, the Annotated Dictionary of Uyghur Language also has an entry for '*läghmän*' (*Uyghur tilning* 1994: 916), which is widely used in spoken – and written – daily language.

Uyghur language starts with 'l'. The most likely etymology is its derivation from the Chinese '*lengmian*' [cold noodles] or '*lamian*' [pulled noodles].[14]

As French sinologist and food historian Françoise Sabban points out, the history of *pasta* between Italy and China, that is from Central Asia to Turkey and onwards, has yet to be written. Yet it is sure that *pasta* has travelled in all directions, leaving tracks that are sometimes difficult to follow (Serventi and Sabban, 2000: vii). Whichever the direction, it is likely that Uyghur *läghmän* are closely related to the Chinese *lamian*, hand-pulled noodles that are found mostly in the northern provinces of China. Like *läghmän*, these are produced by repeatedly pulling and folding a long thick strip of very elastic dough: after, say, eight foldings, one holds 256 long noodles. While the principle is very simple, it is required a remarkable skill to put it into practice. The first Chinese record of *lamian* technique dates back to 1504, when the work *Songshi yangsheng bu* [Mr. Song's book on staying healthy] by Song Xu was published (Serventi and Sabban, 2000: 426–7).

While in restaurants and food stalls across Xinjiang *läghmän* are made exclusively by men, using the above-mentioned technique, to make *läghmän* at home Uyghur women – who are the ones who normally cook in the house – use a less spectacular but equally effective technique. This basically consists in pulling and folding one thin strip of dough at the time. Such a method would not be viable in a restaurant, where hundreds of people eat every day; at home, however, a few strips of dough are enough to feed the whole family.

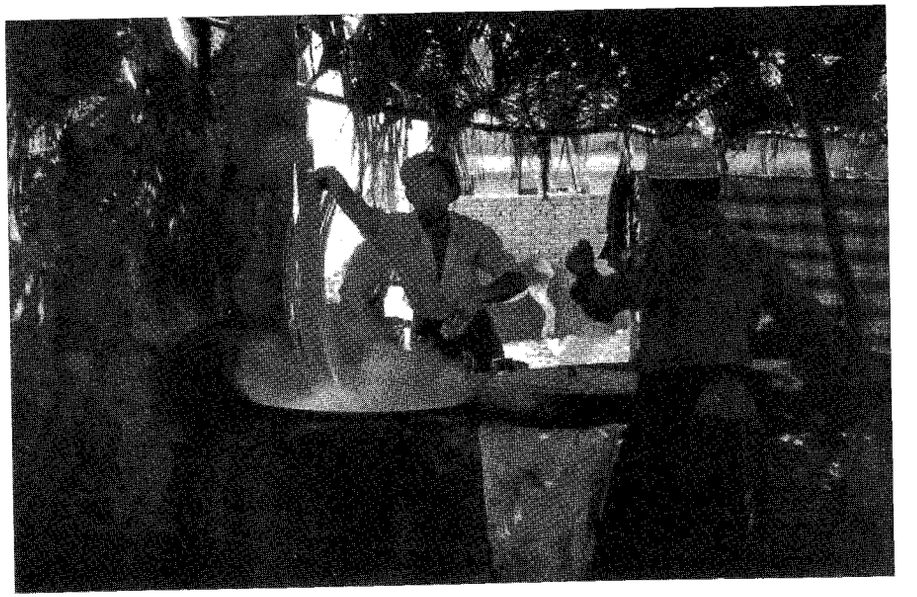

Figure 10.2 Making *läghmän* at the Qäshqär [Kashgar] Sunday Market
Photo by M. Cristina Cesàro, 1997

14 I am not aware of the existence of a Uyghur etymological dictionary; this etymology is derived from a Kazakh etymological dictionary (*Qazaq tilning*, 1987).

Lao Li and his wife, a Han couple from Gansu province who had recently moved to southern Xinjiang, provided me with further evidence of the plausible (northern) Chinese origin of *läghmän*. Their daily staple was not steamed rice – as in most Han households – but hand-pulled noodles which looked exactly like the Uyghur *läghmän*. Unlike the Uyghurs, though, they did not eat them with a rich and juicy topping but simply mixed them with some vinegar and chilli paste and ate while picking at three or four dishes of stir-fried vegetables laid at the middle of the table, the way one would do with a bowl of rice. However, according to Lao Li, the crucial difference does not lie in the topping: he does not like *läghmän* because the Uyghurs rinse the noodles in cold water before mixing the topping, while he likes them steaming hot (and rather sticky).

In short, regardless of the likely Chinese origin of the noodles, today *läghmän* are considered a 'traditional' Uyghur dish not only by the Uyghurs themselves but also by the Han Chinese and by other Central Asian peoples. They have indeed a distinctive Uyghur flavour in the way different ingredients and methods/procedures are combined in a dish which is neither Chinese nor Central Asian but simply Uyghur.

Figure 10.3 A *kawap* brazier outside a restaurant in Ürümchi
Photo by Anna Lisa Cesàro, 1997

Kawaplar [kebabs] are similarly far from exclusive to Uyghur culinary culture. They are found, with a similar name or an equivalent, throughout Central Asia, as well as in Turkey (*kebap*), Greece (*souvlaki*, *giros*), and even beyond the Balkans in Croatia and Slovenia (*čevapčiči*, *rašnijči*) – where Turkish influence in food dates back to the Ottoman Empire. In fact, in Uyghur, *kawap* is a general term for

grilled (or baked) meat, typically mutton. The most common kind in Xinjiang is *ziq kawap* (literally 'skewer-kebab'), that is, pieces of mutton on a skewer grilled on a characteristic brazier and seasoned with ground cumin and, sometimes, ground chilli.

The section of *Uyghur tamaqliri* devoted to *kawap* has nineteen entries (Baqi, 1984). Among these the most popular are, along with liver (*jigär*) or kidney (*böräk*) *kawap*, *qiyma kawap* and *tonur kawap*. *Qiyma kawap* is made with lean mutton mince mixed with chopped onions, eggs, flour, ground cumin, black pepper, and chilli. This mix is then wrapped on a skewer and grilled. In fact, it is not very different from the Turkish *köfte kebap* that one can eat in most kebab shops in Europe. Meanwhile, *tonur kawap* consists of a whole sheep roasted in a *tonur*, the clay oven where *nan* is baked. Clearly, this is a rather expensive and time consuming dish and is normally served at banquets.

Figure 10.4 *Tonur kawap* (a whole lamb baked in the clay oven) served at a *mäshräp*
Photo by M. Cristina Cesàro, 2005

As indicated earlier in 'A Tribute to Ganjiakou', in the Han people's imagination this kebab, which they call *yangrouchuan* [mutton skewer], is generally associated with the Uyghurs; so much so that in China proper the most common stereotypical image of the Uyghurs is that of the kebab seller. Whether Uyghurs in Xinjiang have appropriated this image or not, in any case they too consider *kawap* as a typically Uyghur food. Despite the often derogatory association of Uyghurs and kebabs, the

Han are very fond of these mutton skewers and Uyghur *kawapchilar* [kebab-sellers] could be found almost throughout China already in the late 1980s.

Recent Developments: Chinese Food on Uyghur Tables?

The foods and dishes that I have described lie at the core of what Uyghurs regard as their cuisine, both in oral accounts and in written sources. Clearly this cuisine has not developed in isolation and has been influenced by interaction with other culinary traditions, incorporating individual food items as well as dishes. This is characteristic of most if not all culinary cultures, which are usually the result of an ongoing process of food migration and syncretism (cf. Zubaida and Tapper, 1994; Montanari, 2002). The boundaries of what is considered 'traditional' are permeable and, to a certain extent, arbitrary. For some, knowledge of the 'foreign' origin of *läghmän* or *mänpär* may raise questions about their 'Uyghurness', for others there is no doubt that these foods are Uyghur and they would take offence if someone questioned this. However, on the whole there is a shared notion of what Uyghur cuisine consists of. Furthermore, identification implies differentiation, and people very often also discuss what is not Uyghur. Recent developments in Xinjiang, above all the increasing influx of Han immigrants in the last two or three decades, have also affected Uyghur diet and food habits. While some of these influences are still recognized as external to the core of Uyghur cuisine, it will perhaps not be too long before they are fully incorporated within its boundaries. Having discussed by and large how Uyghur cuisine is defined, let us have a closer look at what Uyghurs actually eat and how they talk about their foods:

> One morning I went to see Dilbär and I stayed for lunch. I asked her what she was cooking. "*So säy* and *mifan*" was her reply. That is, stir-fried vegetables with mutton [*chaocai* in Chinese] and boiled rice [*mifan* in Chinese]. Then she added: "We're not like the Han who use only one vegetable for a dish." Her *so säy* had tomatoes, green beans, meat, and other vegetables. "The rice we make is also better, because we add salt. Moreover, Xinjiang rice is the best and I always buy that, even if it's more expensive". A few days earlier I had stayed for dinner and she had made a similar dish of stir-fried mutton and vegetables with rice, accompanied by a remark in the same tone: "The Han make four or five different dishes, while for us one is enough."
>
> When her ten-year-old daughter Anargül heard that we were going to eat "*mifan*" for lunch, she was delighted. Dilbär didn't miss this chance to tease her with a usual joke "You see? She's the daughter of some Chinese, she's not my daughter" she said. "When she was a baby two poor Han peasants knocked at our door and sold her to us for 500 yuan" and she laughed […]

Uyghurs in Ürümchi are confronted daily with an increasingly large Han presence and this fact is reflected in most of the conversations I had with Uyghurs. People would constantly compare Uyghur ways with Han ways, often implying or explicitly remarking on the superiority of their own ways. This could be read as a counter-hegemonic discourse to that of Han superiority implicit in the Communist civilizing project (see Harrell, 1995). Food, with all its related practices, is a domain in which Uyghurs very strongly affirm their distinctiveness and, often, a sense of

superiority *vis-à-vis* the Han. Some, like Dilbär in the above quotation, are very vocal about this, while others have a rather moderate attitude while still recognizing some difference.

Despite a certain degree of exchange and borrowings, I would definitely make a clear distinction between the core of Uyghur and Chinese cuisine. Differences can be identified in terms of typical meal structure and patterns, ingredients (especially as far as meat, vegetables, and spices are concerned), and taste in general. Very roughly, the structure of a Chinese meal is normally conceived as a combination of *fan*, typically an individual bowl of rice, and a number of *cai* [dishes] shared with the other participants,[15] whereas a Uyghur meal usually consists of a single main course, where dough – as opposed to rice – often plays a predominant role. A main course could be, for instance, *läghmän*, *gösh nan* [a fried pie with a mutton and onion filling], *polo*, or some kind of *suyuq ash* [noodle soup]. Moreover, with the exception of *polo*, the main course is always served on and eaten from individual plates.

However, this divide between cuisines can be bridged over time. While Uyghurs in Ürümchi tend to construct their identity in opposition to the Han Chinese, Uyghur food practices have inevitably been influenced by increased contact with the Han.[16] Recent years have seen innovative forms of borrowing and synthesis, exemplified in dishes such as *ganpan* or *dapanji*. *Ganpan*, a Uyghur word derived from the Chinese *ganfan* (lit. 'dry rice'), is a typical example of a Chinese-style dish that has been adapted and incorporated into the Uyghur diet, if not cuisine. A single dish of boiled rice topped with stir-fried vegetables and mutton, it is basically a rice version of *läghmän*. This is what Dilbär, in the above account, referred to as *so säy* and *mifan*. Her remarks on her daughter's appreciation of this dish implied a recognition of its Chinese origin, if not status. At the same time, though, she treated it as a Uyghur dish when contrasting 'our ways' to the Han Chinese, who cook rice without salt and only use one kind of vegetable for a dish. In fact, the introduction of *ganpan* into the urban Uyghur daily diet is comparatively recent. I remember Bahargül remarking how Uyghur women from rural areas of southern Xinjiang could not make rice. Once she asked one of her students, who was at her house, to help her with lunch and make some rice. 'She couldn't do it! Such a simple thing as cooking rice, she had never done it, since she was from a village in Aksu county'. In Ürümchi *ganpan* was rather popular, especially among working women, as it is much easier and quicker to prepare than any other dish.

In the mid- to late 1990s, *dapanji* (in Chinese literally 'big-plate chicken'), a truly inter-ethnic Xinjiang dish, increasingly gained popularity in the region. It is a spicy hot chicken stew, which is served on a big plate (*dapan*) and shared by a number of people. After the chicken has been eaten, wide flat hand-pulled noodles are poured into the gravy. The story goes that it was invented in Sawan, northern Xinjiang, by a homesick migrant from Sichuan who randomly mixed hot chillies,

15 On Chinese food see Anderson (1988) and Chang (1977).

16 Han food practices in Xinjiang have also been influenced by contact with the Uyghurs. For reasons of space, I cannot discuss here the ways in which Chinese-style food was introduced to the Uyghurs (and *vice versa*), nor the role of the Hui (Chinese Muslims) in the culinary landscape of Xinjiang.

reportedly the staple in Sichuan cuisine, with chicken and potatoes, in an attempt to reproduce a homely taste. This dish combines elements of both Chinese and Uyghur/Turkic cuisine, both in terms of ingredients, for example chillies (Chinese) and flat hand-pulled noodles (Uyghur), and in terms of pattern: it can be eaten as a single main course, following a Uyghur meal pattern, or it can be incorporated in a set of dishes (*cai*) for a Chinese-style meal. In fact, rather than having a specific ethnic identification, it has become a regional dish equally popular among Uyghurs and Han. It is important to stress that there are no distinct ethnic variants; it is the same dish, be it in a Han, Hui, or Uyghur restaurant.

Despite these emerging 'hybrid' forms, in daily life Uyghur cuisine is usually predominant, both in terms of dishes and of meal structures. However, on special occasions this pattern seems to be reversed. In late 1990s' Ürümchi, a prestigious meal, such as a wedding banquet, usually consisted of what Uyghurs called *säy*, or sometimes *so säy* (from the Chinese *chaocai*, stir-fried dishes). Nevertheless, they would not define such a meal as 'Chinese', firstly because it is prepared by a Uyghur cook and is therefore truly *halal* ('lawful' according to Islamic dietary rules) but also because, as the authors of *Uyghur örp-adätliri* point out, these dishes still have 'a particular Uyghur flavour' (Rakhman, Hämdulla and Khushtar, 1996: 27). Only once did I hear a Uyghur refer to *so säy* as 'Chinese'. Eli had invited me to lunch and asked whether I preferred to eat Uyghur or Chinese food. I stared at him in amazement, since Uyghurs would never eat in a Han Chinese restaurant (cf. Cesàro, 2000), and most of the people I talked to would even disapprove of me eating in a Han restaurant. He noticed my surprise and explained 'We can choose between two restaurants, they are both run by Uyghurs. One is very good but they only serve Uyghur food, like *läghmän* or *polo*, while in the other restaurant the Uyghur food is not so special, but they make excellent *so säy*.'

The methods of preparation and the structure of these dishes are indeed characteristic of Chinese cuisine, as outlined above, and their origin is acknowledged in the term that Uyghurs use to describe them (*so*) *säy*, a calque from the Chinese (*chao*) *cai*.[17] In short, if *nan* [bread] with tea or fruit represents the most informal Uyghur meal, on the other hand *säylär* often mark the most formal occasion. My observations suggest that they may even be competing with *polo* as a 'guest food'.

Some Uyghur restaurants divided their menus into *säylär* [dishes] and *tamaqlar* [lit. 'foods'], the latter including Uyghur dishes that constitute main courses on their own, such as *läghmän*, or *polo*. Even the authors of *Uyghur örp-adätliri*, in the concluding paragraph of their introduction to the chapter on food, acknowledge the dynamic nature of Uyghur food habits and the emergence of new habits – such as eating *säy* – as a consequence of recent developments:

> Such characteristics of Uyghur eating and drinking habits have formed in the course of long historical developments and they constantly change and renew following social developments. For instance, in ancient times Uyghur did not eat fried foods [*qoruma tamaqlar*]. Following the development of inter-ethnic cultural exchange, several kinds of fried dishes [*qorulghan säy*] have started entering contemporary Uyghur eating habits. Nevertheless, these fried dishes [*qoruma säylär*] still have a specific Uyghur [*milliy*] flavour as far as ingredients and taste are concerned (Rakhman, Hämdulla and Khushtar, 1996: 27).

17 The Chinese origin of the word *säy* is stated in *Uyghur tilning* (1992: 507). I have come across the phrase 'so *säy*' a number of times in spoken language, however, the word 'so' does not appear to have entered (yet) standard Uyghur as there is no entry for it in Uyghur dictionaries.

However, while the presence of *säylär* on Uyghur tables is acknowledged, these do not appear in their list of foods, perhaps because they are a recent phenomenon and are not considered as traditional food – inevitably regarded as the appropriate object of ethnographic research. Nevertheless, I would not be surprised if, in a few decades, *säylär* became part of 'traditional' Uyghur cuisine, just like *läghmän* did in the past.[18]

Figure 10.5 Eating *säy* at a Uyghur wedding in Ürümchi
Photo by M. Cristina Cesàro, 1997

It is intriguing that Uyghurs in Ürümchi should mark special occasions by choosing what in many respects can be seen as a Chinese meal. For instance, at weddings and similar celebrations, 'traditional' Uyghur food, such as *samsa* [baked dumplings], *manta* [steamed dumplings], *qordaq* [beef stew], and so on, is incorporated into the meal structure as a starter. But the main meal consists of three or four *liang säy* (in Chinese *liangcai*, cold dishes) – such as fried peanuts, cucumber

18 *Säylär* do, however, appear in the Uyghur cookbook *Uyghur tamaqliri* (Baqi, 1984). By way of an example, the section *Soghaq säylär* (cold dishes, that is a 'translation' of the Chinese *liangcai*) includes a '*säwzä-pintoza säy*' (carrot and glass-noodles, *pintoza* being a corruption of the Chinese word for 'glass-noodles', *fentiaozi*) and a '*pämidur säy*' (tomato dish).

salad, cold soya or rice noodles, and so on – accompanied by a number of *issiq säy* (in Chinese *recai*, hot dishes) placed at the centre so that everybody eats from the same plate, in the Chinese manner. The latter usually include at least three or four meat (mutton or chicken) and/or vegetables dishes, mostly stir-fried, and fish. More 'traditional' Uyghur food, such as for instance mini-*kawap*, can be included in the meal, provided that it is 'formatted' as a *säy* and incorporated in the relevant set of dishes (cold or hot). In fact, a process of transformation is clearly evident, where both dishes and meal structures are manipulated and combined to create a new synthesis. This, moreover, occurs within a distinctive Uyghur framework, not only as far as ingredients and taste are concerned, but also in terms of manners, rules of commensality, norms of hospitality, and notions of contamination revolving around the Islamic concept of *halal* (cf. Cesàro, 2000, 2002: 174–85).

Conclusion

Due to their Chinese origin, *ganpan* and *säy* occupy an ambiguous position in the contemporary Uyghur culinary landscape. While this origin is acknowledged, often implicitly, they are subject to a process of reinterpretation which may eventually transform them into 'traditional' Uyghur dishes – like *läghmän* or *polo*. In any case, while the Chinese and Uyghur culinary worlds are bridged, the dishes are also simultaneously marked as different, to make sure that there is no confusion between what is Chinese and what is Uyghur. This is even more evident when compared with the status of other dishes or foods which are not 'originally' or exclusively Uyghur.

Uyghur cuisine and food practices, as defined in opposition to the Chinese, are to a great extent shared by other Turkic peoples in Xinjiang, as well as across the border in the Central Asian Republics and even Afghanistan. Today Uyghurs, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, and other Turkic groups share many foods and practices, which are unproblematically perceived as stemming from a common tradition. In other words, differentiation, where it occurs, is situated within a common Turkic framework. There is by no means the same urgency to create a distinction between Central Asian traditions comparable to that between the Han and the Uyghurs (cf. Bellér-Hann in this volume, who similarly argues that levels of difference must be distinguished).

The hybrid and syncretic aspects of Uyghur food practices were succintly summarized by Dilbär. Once, while talking about biscuits and cakes that are offered to guests, especially during the two main holidays, she commented: 'And these are not even traditional Uyghur sweets; they're western. We learnt something from the east and something from the west. We took *säy* from the Orientals and sweets from the Westerners.' However, while *vis-à-vis* the Orientals, namely the Han Chinese, Uyghurs manifest the urgency to differentiate, when turning westwards, particularly to other Turkic peoples, there is no such need to differentiate and the stress is rather on continuity of cultural practices, in most cases supported by a common linguistic, religious, and cultural background.

Today, we can identify both Central Asian and Chinese 'flavours' on the Uyghur table. Indeed, what makes Uyghur cuisine truly distinctive is precisely their unique combination. Food has always travelled, in all directions, often making it difficult

to establish 'original ownership' or a 'hierarchy of tradition'; *polo* and *läghmän* are wonderful examples. Chinese influence on Uyghur culinary culture is probably stronger than ever today, due to prolonged and much more intense interaction. However, it is important to stress that there is an element of choice: whatever Chinese – or any other – influence we can observe in Uyghur food, this is the result of a process of selection and reinterpretation in which Uyghurs are active agents rather than passive recipients. Moreover, what defines Uyghur cuisine as distinctive is not just a specific set of dishes, but rather a long-standing culinary tradition – however changing and dynamic in its content – along with certain social practices and values expressed in the domain of food, which are largely shared with other Central Asian peoples.

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Chapter 11

'The Dawn of the East': A Portrait of a Uyghur Community Between China and Kazakhstan

Sean R. Roberts

The 1990s was a time of extreme change for most Uyghurs. China was opening up to the outside world, and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of China, where the majority of Uyghurs live, was gradually being integrated into a new globalizing world order. Uyghurs from the XUAR were travelling to numerous places outside of their homeland, and the XUAR itself was increasingly becoming a destination for international tourists as well as for traders from the former Soviet Union and Pakistan. Across the border from the XUAR, the former Soviet Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, all of which also have large local Uyghur populations, were likewise becoming incorporated into a new world order of open borders and free trade. In short, after decades of isolation, the Uyghurs living in various locations throughout Central Asia had unprecedented access to the outside world in the 1990s. While the Uyghurs were certainly not the only people during the 1990s to face such a sudden re-opening to the rest of the world, as a relatively small minority in both the former USSR and China, they were among the most politically marginalized to be breathing the fresh air of open borders in the wake of the cold war's end.

In this context, the Kazakhstan city of Almaty had become, in many respects, the centre of an evolving transnational Uyghur community by the mid-1990s. While far fewer Uyghurs lived in Almaty than in any of the larger cities of the XUAR with significant Uyghur populations, Almaty was symbolically significant as a cultural and political centre for the transnational Uyghur community of the 1990s. The relative liberalism, or at least *laissez-faire* governance, of Kazakhstan in the 1990s combined with its status as one of four newly independent Turkic nation-states in the former U.S.S.R made it a logical place for the politically marginalized stateless Turkic Uyghurs to congregate. Throughout the 1990s, Kazakhstan at least tolerated the existence of Uyghur nationalist groups on its territory and liberally granted visas to Uyghur visitors from China, Turkey, and other diaspora locations. In Almaty, Uyghurs from various locations around the world could meet, freely discuss politics, and negotiate the cultural, historical, and linguistic traits of their *nation*. In effect, Almaty had become the site for negotiating a cross-border stateless nation that, having always been part of a larger Central Asia more than of either Russian or Chinese cultural spheres, had been recently re-united. This chapter provides an

analysis of this negotiation as reflected in the daily activities of a specific community. In doing so, it argues that such an analysis of daily practice in a single community provides a much clearer vision of identity negotiation than do generalizations about the nation as a whole.

Practicing the Negotiation of the Uyghur Nation in Almaty, Kazakhstan

Cultural negotiations take place within virtually any national community due to the characteristic of nations as contested *imagined communities*, the majority of adherents to which never meet face to face (Anderson, 1991). The Uyghur community of Almaty, however, is particularly contested for several reasons. Most importantly, the Uyghurs of Almaty are essentially a borderland community. While Almaty is not directly located on the border of China, it is only a few hours distance by car. Consequently, it has always been a city of cross-border interaction for the Uyghurs, the majority of which live in China, and they have found themselves in this city negotiating between the divergent influences emanating from respective sides of the border for over a century. As a result, the Uyghurs of Almaty can be divided into several groups determined by their respective experiences on each side of the border. As I have elaborated elsewhere (Roberts, 1998b), these groups can be roughly characterized as consisting of three separate migration cohorts: those that have lived on Kazakhstan's territory for several generations, usually referred to as *yärlik* or locals, those who came from China in the 1950s and 1960s, who once were known as *kitailik* or Chinese but are now more generally referred to as *köchäp kegän* or immigrants, and those who have arrived either as short-term or long-term migrants from China in the last 15 years and are known as *kitailik* (Chinese) or *wätändin* (from the homeland). The variance in lived experience of each of these migration groups is reflected in their different perceptions of what it means to be both a Uyghur and a Muslim, making both nationalist and religious discourse in the diverse Almaty Uyghur community especially contested.

In addition, there is another, seemingly very obvious, reason that the Uyghur community of Almaty is especially contested. As a stateless group, in the sense that they do not identify with any particular nation-state, but feel themselves as minorities in all states in which they live, the Uyghurs are not as susceptible as most people in the world to the hegemonic ideals of any particular state-promoted civic identity. While they may be influenced by the official and civic ideals of the Uyghur nationality once promoted by the Soviet Union or still promoted by the People's Republic of China and Kazakhstan, these ideals do not carry much weight in the community, which does not feel complete allegiance to any of these states. Furthermore, as is the case with most stateless peoples, no single Uyghur has an official mandate to represent the nation and its interests, leaving the nation without any recognizable leadership.[1] On the one hand, this situation leaves the Uyghurs of Almaty without a state-inspired

1 The Tibetans are an exception to this general rule. For the Tibetans, the Dalai Lama provides such leadership, but he has a religious mandate that facilitates his position as the undisputed leader of the nation. Islam does not facilitate such a religious leader for the Uyghurs.

hegemony to guide a mainstream of culture and without an undisputed leader to provide a national *vision*. On the other hand, it is precisely the Uyghurs' stateless status and lack of singular leadership that creates an imperative for unity in the community and fosters active attempts to negotiate a culture of consensus that can be at least displayed for outsiders. This imperative for unity is furthermore expressed consciously by Uyghurs in Almaty who state openly that cultural unity is their only chance to avoid total marginalization and even assimilation.

These various factors, coupled with the dramatic socio-economic and political changes on-going in Kazakhstan since the fall of the Soviet Union, provided for a very dynamic cultural *milieu* in Almaty's Uyghur community during the 1990s, when various and often contradictory cultural influences were being negotiated daily. In particular, daily practice in local Uyghur neighbourhoods in this context constantly reflected the tension between the contested nature of Uyghur 'culture' in this community and the imperative to foster a unified ideal of that 'culture', especially for outsiders. This tension operated on both a conscious and an unconscious level in most community gatherings where diverse residents interacted in activities that were meant to reflect a unified ideal of the 'proper' practices of the Uyghur nation. This chapter will examine this tension as it was reflected at this time in the daily community practices within one specific neighbourhood of Almaty known as *Zarya Vostoka*, or the 'Dawn of the East' as its name is translated from Russian. In exploring such dynamics within a single neighbourhood, I argue that one is able to provide a better portrait of the dynamic and fluid nature of Uyghur identity in the Kazakhstan-China borderland than can be achieved through generalizations about this population, whether or not those generalizations are justified by qualitative or quantitative data.

In analysing the negotiation of the Uyghur nation as expressed in such gatherings, this chapter focuses on three very broad and admittedly politically charged cultural influences that are more reflective of discourses in Uyghur society than of easily identifiable sources of cultural transmission. These are *Islam*, *the socialist legacy* (especially the Soviet legacy), and *capitalism*. These are useful discourses to examine since they entail different attitudes towards on-going and contested processes of globalization, and they also tend to be identified with each migration cohort among the Uyghurs of Almaty in different ways. The socialist legacy, which had a much more lasting impact culturally in the Soviet Union than in China, for example, is mostly identifiable among the *yärlik* local Uyghurs. The Islam discourse, by contrast, is most strongly identified with the new arrivals from China in Kazakhstan since Islam has not been as suppressed in the XUAR as in Soviet Central Asia during most of the twentieth century. The Uyghurs who migrated to the USSR in the 1950s and 1960s tend to embrace a cultural discourse that includes both Islam and the socialist legacy, reflecting their mixed experiences on both sides of the border. Finally, the capitalism discourse is new to all three groups and tends to express itself in the actions of each of the three groups differently. In looking at the practice of community ritual, each of these cultural discourses plays a role, sometimes in competition and sometimes complementarily. Given the imperative of displaying unity in the community, however, such ritual practice provides a window into the ways that these vastly different cultural discourses can be reconciled in the construction of a community

that, despite variances in its beliefs about religion, the nation, and global processes, unifies around nationalist pride.

The analysis provided here of how these different discourses interact in the production and negotiation of Uyghur identity in *Zarya Vostoka* draws significantly from Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977). According to Bourdieu, group consciousness is generally produced in people's daily practices and especially in their coordinated community practices. Through interaction and competition for respect, or *symbolic capital*, in the daily practices of local communities, individuals develop habitual behaviour based in unconscious assumptions about what is expected within the community. In a cultural *milieu* as fluid as that of *Zarya Vostoka* in the 1990s, however, the assumptions of what is proper and expected in daily practices varies with the very different lived experiences of its inhabitants. In this context, a new ideal of what is proper and expected is produced through the subtle negotiations between members of the community in their interactions. In short, this negotiated ideal of correct behaviour, which is born of community interaction, also serves as the community's collective perception of what it means to be a Uyghur. Before analysing such negotiations as they were played out in the community gatherings I observed during my fieldwork in the neighbourhood of *Zarya Vostoka*, however, it is important to provide some background information about this community, the history of which typifies the awkward place of the Uyghur people between Chinese and (former) Soviet spheres of influence throughout the twentieth century.

The History of Zarya Vostoka between China and the Former Soviet Union

Zarya Vostoka was originally built as a collective farm on the outskirts of the Soviet city of Alma-Ata (now Almaty) in 1930. The Dungan revolutionary Maghzi Ma-san-chi helped to establish the area as a *kolkhoz* (collective farm) for Dungans, and initially it was named after the nineteenth century Dungan military leader Biyanhu, who had fought in Muslim rebellions against the Qing Empire (Jälilov, 1998: 11).[2] In 1933, its name was officially changed to Zarya Vostoka [Dawn of the East], a name suggestive of the role the Soviets foresaw that the Dungans could play in spreading the communist revolution towards the East and China. In the early 1950s as collectivization of agriculture consolidated in Soviet Central Asia, Zarya Vostoka joined with several other neighbouring *kolkhozes* to form the larger *sovkhoz* [state farm] of *Prigorodnyi* (Jälilov, 1998: 11). While the initial inhabitants of the collective farm only included four Uyghur families, this changed significantly in the mid-1950s and early 1960s as thousands of Uyghur families left China for the Soviet Union either as claimants to Soviet citizenship in the 1950s or as political refugees

2 *Dungans* are Chinese speaking Muslims living in Central Asia. The Han Chinese refer to them as *Hui*, an ethnonym that they themselves also use within the borders of China. The majority of Dungans came to Kazakhstan in the late nineteenth century along with a significant Uyghur migration after the Russian Empire had returned the region of Ghulja to the Qing Empire in 1881 (see Kabirov, 1951). For more on the Dungans within China, see Gladney (1991).

in the early 1960s.[3] Many of these Uyghur immigrants settled on the new *sovkhoz* alongside the Dungans, with whom they shared a historical attachment to north-west China. According to people who came to the farm at that time, a Uyghur *sovkhoz* administrator with relatives in China had invited many immigrants who had been sent elsewhere on arrival in the Soviet Union to move to *Zarya Vostoka*. While many Dungan families continued to live there, Uyghurs soon formed the largest ethnic group on the farm. As a result of this influx of Uyghur immigrants, the *mähällä*, or traditional neighbourhood structure, in *Zarya Vostoka* expanded, and it was divided into a 'lower' section inhabited mostly by Uyghur immigrants and an 'upper' section where most of the Dungans and other nationalities lived.[4]

Most of the Uyghur immigrants from China who came to *Zarya Vostoka* in the 1950s and 1960s were not experienced farmers. They came to the collective farm primarily because they were eager to find work in the adjacent city of Alma-Ata. My former landlord in *Zarya Vostoka*, for example, recounted to me how he had supported his family by illegally selling surplus fruits and vegetables at Alma-Ata's Green bazaar. For the right to 'unofficially' trade at the bazaar, he paid a bribe to a policeman everyday. Likewise, another immigrant from the Ghulja area of the XUAR told me that he had run an illicit business bringing fruits and vegetables to Siberia for many years. Several others with whom I talked had worked with the Soviet railway as stewards on the train that travelled between Moscow and Alma-Ata. Through this job, they were able to take advantage of the economy of scarcity in the Soviet Union to bring goods with them in both directions and sell them for a profit. According to others in Almaty, the area also served as a centre of the city's narcotics traffic in the 1970s. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, therefore, *Zarya Vostoka* was already becoming a 'rurban' area where the economy was mixed between agriculture in the service of the state farm and illicit trade in the service of the city.

During the 1970s, the Uyghurs from China who had settled on this state farm apparently already began instituting numerous traditional rituals and community practices that had long been lost to those Uyghurs already living in the Soviet Union ever since the repression of the 1930s. These included the formation of *mäshräps*, or male cohort groups that serve as a part of the organizational and informal governance structure of the community, the election of *zhigit beshi*, or male leaders for each generation, and the practice of various life cycle rituals.[5] They even continued to

3 Thousands of Uyghurs came to Kazakhstan from China in the 1950s and 1960s. Those coming in the 1950s claimed to have formerly lived in the U.S.S.R and, thus, were eligible for Soviet citizenship. Those coming in the early 1960s were generally political refugees who found themselves on the wrong side of the evolving Sino-Soviet split. For more on these migrations, see Roberts (1998b).

4 The designation of 'upper' and 'lower' sections of the *mähällä* is related to the physical geography of the city, which is built on an incline. Running north to south, the city climbs towards the foothills of the *Ala-Tau* mountains, creating a natural incline.

5 For more on the *mäshräp*, see Roberts (1998a). The etymology of the title *zhigit beshi* comes from the Uyghur word for young adult male, *yigit*, and the word for leader or head, *bash* (conjugated after a singular modifying noun to be *beshi*). In its use in the Kazakhstan-China borderlands, however, the name has changed to account for the northern dialect of the Uyghur language, which uses *zhigit* rather than *yigit*. Given that this institution is primarily a

observe religious holidays and would hold mass prayers in the local graveyard for Ramadan and *Qurban*, a practice for which they were reprimanded in the 1980s.[6] These aspects of traditional community practice in *Zarya Vostoka* during the Soviet period, however, were usually undertaken in secrecy for fear of reprisal from local officials.

With the advent of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost'*, the residents of the neighbourhood began more forcefully asserting their right to cultural expression. In 1990, the residents were able to convince the Head of Ideological Affairs in the Oblast' Communist Party Administration to allow them to build a mosque. In turn, local Uyghurs and Dungans pooled their resources and built a mosque in the 'upper' section of the *mähällä*. Given the location of the mosque and the fact that its imam was a Dungan, however, the Uyghurs in the 'lower' section of the neighbourhood decided to build their own mosque soon after. In 1991, they built a small make-shift mosque and the foundation for a larger more permanent one in the mostly Uyghur 'lower' section of the neighbourhood. Securing $2,000 (USD) from an Islamic society in Saudi Arabia and $600 (USD) from an Islamic Society in the United Kingdom, they began building the larger mosque shortly there after, and it was completed in 1994. They selected an elder Uyghur from the *mähällä* to be its imam, and sermons were conducted in the Uyghur language.

Around the same time, the Uyghurs in this community lobbied Party officials to allow them to open a Uyghur school. While the other nationalities on the farm were against this idea, the Uyghur Cultural Centre in Almaty helped the residents in their negotiations with government officials. As a result, the local Party officials gave them permission to open the school as long as the Uyghurs in the community supported it financially. After the Uyghur residents in *Zarya Vostoka* were able to raise some $10,000 (USD), the school opened in 1990. To help in the construction, the mosque even donated bricks and some additional money.

While *Zarya Vostoka* was busy opening a Uyghur mosque and school, the area around the state farm was also gradually becoming a commercial centre as the home to the largest market in the city – the *Barakholka*, a generic Russian word for flea market that is based on the word for 'junk' (*barakhlo*). As one Dungan resident of *Zarya Vostoka* told me, this bazaar had made the neighbourhood by the late 1990s into an international port of trade, or as he put it more specifically, 'a port on the new silk road'. The market attracted merchants from throughout Central Asia, the southern reaches of Russian Siberia, and China. Most importantly to the community of *Zarya Vostoka*, the bazaar attracted significant numbers of Uyghur traders from China, many of whom went into the trade business together with relatives in the neighbourhood.

phenomenon of northern Uyghurs, I prefer to use the spelling that best reflects this geographical vernacular.

6 The fact that Soviet Muslims prayed in graveyards may account for some of the behaviour that American and European scholars have in the past labelled as organized Sufism (see Bennigsen and Wimbush, 1985). While this resolution to the problem of a lack of local mosques may have been influenced by Sufism, all who discussed it with me emphatically denied that it had anything to do with Sufi orders.

As a result, the bazaar and the adjacent neighborhood of *Zarya Vostoka* became one of the primary meeting places for Uyghurs in Almaty. The neighbourhood itself was overwhelmingly populated by Uyghur immigrants who had come from China in the 1950s and 1960s and had engaged in a mixture of socialism, Islam, and capitalism in the course of their lives. Local *yärlik* Uyghurs, who had been mostly socialized by Soviet sensibilities their whole lives, came to the area often to shop and trade at the bazaar. Finally, the new *kitailik* Uyghur shuttle traders from China, who had more experience with the practices of Islam and trading than the others but little familiarity with Soviet culture, made this bazaar the base for their commercial operations in the city. In short, the area had become a central location for the negotiation of a new transnational Uyghur identity because it had truly become a Uyghur community lodged between the new China and the new Kazakhstan of the 1990s, but still under the influence of a gradually fading Soviet past.

Given this background, it is not surprising that *Zarya Vostoka* also became one of the first Uyghur neighbourhoods in Almaty to aggressively begin to 'revive' its neighbourhood traditions. Firstly, the residents of the neighbourhood had already begun this process more surreptitiously as early as the late 1960s and 1970s after they had settled on the local state farm. During this time, they had already begun practicing the *mäshräp* ritual, which as I have discussed elsewhere is a ritual of establishing male age cohorts that feed into the social structure and informal governance of Almaty's Uyghur neighbourhoods (Roberts, 1998a). Likewise, they had already begun mass prayer meetings at the same time, and these practices were easily transferred to the neighbourhood mosque in the 1990s. After the fall of the Soviet Union, therefore, the inhabitants of this neighbourhood merely began more openly practicing much of what they had done previously in a more subtle manner, placing the community at the forefront of the revival of local Uyghur rituals in the city.

Through the process of more openly practicing religious and other community rituals, however, daily life in *Zarya Vostoka* also changed significantly. Weddings lost the trapping of state socialism and became more openly a religious ceremony, Muslim holidays were no longer quiet gatherings of the neighbourhood residents but large public celebrations, and the mosque took over from the collective farm's administration building as the central gathering place for neighbourhood decision makers. It would be a mistake, however, to see these transformations as merely a religious revival. While religion began to play a larger role in people's lives, the legacy of Soviet civic culture and the influence of global capitalism in Kazakhstan were equally influential. Furthermore, the motivations behind this cultural revival appeared to be more nationalist than religious in orientation.

The history of *Zarya Vostoka* since its founding in 1930, therefore, has constantly been intertwined with the relations between the former USSR and China. Initially, the community was a collective farm of Muslims from China who were seen as being at the vanguard of the communist international's march eastward. Later, it became a settlement mostly of Uyghur immigrants and refugees from China who maintained Uyghur traditions from pre-communist China while adapting to the realities of Soviet life. Finally, in the 1990s, it had become the primary location for the cross-border trade between China and Kazakhstan that was facilitating the reunification of

Uyghur families on both sides of the border. This history, however, does not capture the neighbourhood's true cross-border nature and its internal negotiation of diverse cultural discourses. This is only seen through the daily life of its inhabitants and the ways that their daily interactions serve to negotiate what it means to be a Uyghur between China and the former Soviet Union.

Community Practices in Zarya Vostoka and the Production of Uyghur Identity

The remainder of this chapter will provide analysis of several community gatherings in *Zarya Vostoka* that I witnessed during the 1990s, stressing how the practice of these ritual gatherings demonstrate the negotiation of the different cultural discourses existent in this Uyghur community. I have chosen three community gatherings to examine – the opening of a new soccer field, the community's celebration of the Muslim holiday *Qurban Heyit*, and the election of a new *zhigit beshi*, or community leader, for the youth residents in the neighbourhood.[7] Each of these examples illustrate both the tension and resolution of differences in the community through practice. Furthermore, with the exception of the last example, which was strictly an internal affair of the neighbourhood, they all entail the participation of Uyghurs representing all three of the major migration cohorts that are prevalent in Almaty.

The Soccer Field Opening

In the spring of 1997, a group of younger adult men in the Uyghur community of *Zarya Vostoka* took on the task of building a new soccer field in an open area by a swamp. These young men were all children of *köchäp kegän* immigrants, some of whom had been born in Xinjiang, but most of whom had been born in the Soviet Union after their parents arrived from China in the late 1950s and early 1960s. They were also all businessmen, mostly petty traders, who had some access to disposable income and a desire to raise their profile in the neighbourhood. While they were not particularly religious and did drink alcohol fairly frequently, all had learned to pray and went to the mosque occasionally, mostly on religious holidays. In general, this particular group of young men was viewed suspiciously in the Uyghur community as a whole and by many residents in their own neighbourhood. Many *yärlik* Uyghurs saw them as *spekulanty*, a Soviet word with negative connotations used to describe traders. Many of the more religious Uyghurs in the neighbourhood, including most of the Uyghur traders from China, viewed the men as poor Muslims who drank and rarely went to the mosque.

Despite the suspicion with which many Uyghurs viewed this group of men, when they had built the soccer field, people in the neighbourhood were appreciative since it provided a healthy outlet for children after school. The group of men, however, had higher expectations as they were getting of the age when they wished to have more respect in their neighbourhood, and they decided to organize a large opening

7 The first two of these events have been analysed with an emphasis on the negotiation of religion in an article printed elsewhere. Certain passages from that article are re-printed here (see Roberts, 2006).

celebration for the soccer field that would include a blessing by the neighbourhood imam as a means to this end. At first, within the group there was quite heated debate about the idea – some said that they should just have a party with those who played soccer; others argued that the neighbourhood elders should be invited in order to bless the field and to make it a more inclusive neighbourhood affair. In the end, it was decided to make it a large affair, complete with the participation of the neighbourhood elders and the imam. I, as the resident documentarian, was enlisted to video tape the event for neighbourhood history.

The event was organized for the first Sunday of April, and preparations began. They included a live Uyghur pop music band, a cook to make a large portion of *pilau* [*polo*, cf. Cesàro in this volume], and an amplification system to ensure that all speakers were audible to everybody in attendance.[8] When the day came, they planned the opening to occur after a daytime prayer session so as to ensure that all the elders were together. Once prayers ended, the elder men began to walk towards the field. To accent their entrance, music was played and the rest of the neighbourhood was gathered waiting for the entrance of the elders. The effect was impressive to be sure, and it lent the entire event the air of ritual that its organizers had desired. Once the elders entered the field, the music stopped. First, one of the organizers spoke, welcoming everybody from the neighbourhood to the celebration and stressing the importance the new soccer field would hold for the youth of the neighbourhood. Then, the *zhigit beshi*, or neighbourhood head gave a speech noting the great accomplishment of these young men in constructing this field for everybody in the neighbourhood. This was followed by an official blessing by the imam, during which all present were silent. Once the field had been blessed, the organizers began serving *pilau* and tea on makeshift tablecloths laid on the ground just as if this had been a wedding or a *sünnät toy*.[9] After all had eaten, the imam once again said a prayer, and the elders left, as they had entered, with great ceremony. During the entire time, there had been no alcohol present, but once the elders had left, the organizers pulled out bottles of vodka and began to enjoy an afternoon of drinking and toasts, most of which honoured themselves for their successful construction of ritual.

In discussing the event with people present, I found that there was general consensus among everybody that it was a great event. The elders were pleased that these young men had organized such a proper blessing and had honoured the elders in the process. Several Uyghur traders from China who had joined the celebration after prayers at the mosque likewise were pleased with this display of generosity and general good work for the neighbourhood. Finally, the group of organizers and their friends, some of whom were local *yärlik* Uyghurs, were very pleased with the whole event, including the drunken fest that followed.

In a very simple way, this small ritual event had fulfilled everybody's wishes. While it was an obvious display of wealth on the part of the organizers, who were

8 *Pilau* is a staple Central Asian dish of steamed rice, carrots, mutton, garlic, and other spices. It is relatively inexpensive to make for a large group, making it the standard dish for big celebrations.

9 A *sünnät toy* is a celebration of a young boy's circumcision, performed among Uyghurs in Kazakhstan usually at age 5 or 6, right before they enter school.

nominally successful traders in the new market economy, it had a religious dimension thanks to the participation of the imam. Furthermore, it also fulfilled those who had been raised in the Soviet Union by offering a good dose of drinking at the end. By engaging Muslim, Soviet, and capitalist cultural discourses in a careful way, it had succeeded in pleasing everybody without insulting anyone. It also provided its organizers with important symbolic capital in the neighbourhood as benefactors, who could speak to the diverse desires of the community.

Qurban Heyit in Zarya Vostoka

In 1997, when I was in *Zarya Vostoka* for *Qurban*, it was evident that many people were still experiencing various rituals associated with this holiday for the first time. Furthermore, since the neighbourhood is directly next to the bazaar, the morning prayer involved not only residents of the neighbourhood, but Uyghurs of all migration cohorts from throughout the city. Given the many visitors coming from other neighbourhoods, it is not surprising that everybody in *Zarya Vostoka*, regardless of their religiosity, tried to conduct the ritual as accurately as possible to demonstrate that their neighbourhood had a particularly good grasp on Uyghur 'culture,' which in virtually all of its guises, of course, includes the practice of Islam.

The day before *Qurban* some Arabs and Pakistanis from a Muslim charitable organization came to the neighbourhood and slaughtered a cow for distribution among the residents.[10] The *zhigit beshi* neighbourhood leader and neighbourhood imam oversaw this act of charity and took copious notes on who received meat and how much. It was only the poorer residents of the neighbourhood who took the meat, and there was a certain degree of pride in not taking the meat as a show of one's self-sufficiency in the new economy of Kazakhstan.

The following morning, at dawn, a male crowd began to gather for *Qurban* prayer, and the mosque gradually filled up for the better part of an hour as the crowd reached close to a thousand strong, spilling into the entire courtyard. Men entered in groups, coming to the mosque's gate, stopping all together to say a prayer, and then entering together. The ages represented spanned all generations as many men brought their young sons to their first *Qurban* prayer. While this crowd at a mosque for *Qurban* prayer would not be surprising in Xinjiang, in Almaty, it was an impressive sight given that most prayers at the local mosques barely fill the main prayer hall. A young Uyghur *alim* from Xinjiang said the sermon, which discussed the meaning of the holiday and its proper observation.[11] He then said an impassioned prayer that included blessing the Uyghurs of Xinjiang, asking God to help them endure the repression in China by maintaining the unity of the nation. At the end, music

10 While usually families slaughter smaller animals, such as a sheep, for this holiday, this group slaughtered a cow because it was more economical given the many people they hoped to feed with the meat from the sacrifice.

11 An *alim* is an Islamic scholar. Since the principles of Islam suggest that no human is more *holy* than another, such scholars are seen to be merely interpreters of the path prescribed by Mohammed. As such, they often administer religious rites and lead prayers at the mosque.

bellowed from the mosque's loudspeakers, in an attempt to mimic the large *Qurban* celebrations at Qäshqär's Heytgah mosque, but nobody danced – they merely filed out as they had entered.

Following the prayer, people from the neighborhood went back to their homes, many to conduct the sacrifice of livestock associated with the holiday. At my home, I watched as the eldest son of the family uncomfortably slit a sheep's throat as instructed by his father. While the son had long been the primary provider for the household, his father had always performed the sacrifice in the past as the head of the family. This *Qurban*, however, the son seemed to be undergoing a rite of passage through his first sacrifice, perhaps recognizing that he had essentially become the head of the household. The sacrifice was followed by a family trip to the graveyard, where all chipped in to clean the grave of their deceased mother.

Later in the day, after these more private household activities had been fulfilled, the real community celebrations began. I went with the elders to virtually every home in our section of the neighbourhood to briefly taste the food from different household's sacrifices. The young *alim* from China joined us and blessed all the meals. It was during this process that the real cultural negotiation began. Various households demonstrated different understandings of the ritual, and the young *alim* from Xinjiang found himself offering advice on how to serve the food and how to hold the ceremony in many households. The wealthiest inhabitants of the neighbourhood, of course, provided generous portions to show their wealth, while poorer households offered soup with scant meat that had been donated the day before by the foreign Muslim charitable organization. Those families more influenced by Soviet traditions included plates of Russian pickled salads, and those who sought to demonstrate their ties to Xinjiang included plates of roasted beans and other snacks brought back from China on trading jaunts. Virtually all households, however, had *sangza*, the dried noodles fried in sheep fat and arranged in a spiral that are standard fare in Uyghur households during *Qurban* and Ramadan feasts.

Despite varied degrees of understanding in the neighborhood about why this holiday was celebrated and how, it was a unifying experience. Some elders would comment on the quality of the meal at different households, but generally there was no discussion of various people's degrees of religiosity or relative wealth. The religiously knowledgeable *alim* from Xinjiang did not ridicule those who took part in the ritual despite never going to mosque, and all residents showed him great respect. As with the opening of the soccer field, however, there was no overt drinking of vodka, at least until the elders had already left a home. This ritual, thus, was practiced in a more or less unified manner by an extremely diverse population. It included elements of the new economic relations of capitalism in the neighbourhood as those with wealth sought to demonstrate their superiority. Obviously, it was overwhelmingly religious in nature and, thus, engaged Islam on several levels. And, it still had significant influence from the Soviet past in various homes, including the service of Russian food and the drinking of vodka once the elders had left their homes.

In both this celebration and the soccer field opening, it is also worth noting that the competition for symbolic capital was an integral part of community interaction. In their participation in the gatherings, members of the community were constantly

vying for respect or *hörmät* in order to better their position within the neighbourhood. The entire purpose of the soccer field opening ceremony, for example, was to build symbolic capital for the young men who had built it. In doing so, however, the organizers needed to appeal to the wide spectrum of Uyghurs in the community. During the celebration of *Qurban Heyit*, various people used the gatherings for the enrichment of their own symbolic capital. The imam and *alim*, for example, certainly won symbolic capital by demonstrating their knowledge of Islam, but also by doing so without berating those who still have a poor grasp on the practices of their own religion. Likewise, the wealthier inhabitants of the neighbourhood built on their symbolic capital during the celebrations by providing a generous helping of high quality meat to all visitors who came to see them. Nonetheless, in both of these cases, the competition for symbolic capital and the tension between the different discourses in Uyghur culture that this competition entails remained in the back drop of the event itself, which was at least publicly meant for an entirely different purpose. The last example discussed here, however, brings the competition for symbolic capital and the tension between different ideals of the Uyghur nation into the forefront. This was an election for a youth neighbourhood head, or *zhigit beshi*.[12]

The Youth Zhigit Beshi Elections in Zarya Vostoka

The *zhigit beshi*, as already mentioned above, is an institution that is connected to the *mäshräp* ritual of male age cohort gatherings that, at least in Almaty, feeds into the informal governance structure of local Uyghur neighbourhoods. At different times in the 1990s, each Uyghur neighbourhood in Almaty established a *zhigit beshi* neighbourhood leader. This leader, however, is generally in his 50s, making him close to the age of the elders, but young enough to be an extremely active contributor in community organizing. In 1997, the four largest Uyghur neighbourhoods in the city decided to establish a second zhigit beshi in the 20–40-year-old age bracket to represent the interests of younger people in the neighbourhood. One of these neighbourhoods was *Zarya Vostoka*.

These plans were known several weeks prior to the actual election of the youth *zhigit beshi*, and several young prominent men in the community obviously began to make themselves more visible in the neighbourhood as a means of informally campaigning for the position. The eldest son of the family in which I lived, for example, started organizing the repair of one of the local roads in the neighbourhood and made a point of more frequently going to mosque. Others displayed similar behaviour in their quest to gain favour before the election. In general, the men vying for the position could be divided into three types that return us to the three cultural discourses identified earlier: 1) young religious leaders who were either *alims* or *hajs*; 2) young educated men who had been socialized in the Soviet Union and continue to occupy a role as people of knowledge in the neighbourhood such as

12 The meaning of youth here does not refer to school children, but to all men between the ages of twenty and forty.

teachers and scholars; and 3) those who have gained significant but modest wealth through trading or other small businesses.[13]

When the day of the election arrived, the process was not a vote in the traditional sense. Rather, it was an informal negotiation of consensus held at the soccer field. Three older men, including the elder neighbourhood *zhigit beshi*, led the meeting, and they had a list of some 43 *mäshräp* groups in the neighbourhood representing different age cohorts and groups of 20–30 friends each between the ages of 20 and 40 from whom the leader would be chosen.

The elder *zhigit beshi*, who seemed to be running the event, opened the meeting. He noted that this was a serious process that required picking the best person for the good of the neighbourhood. He noted that the proper person should be involved in all aspects of the neighbourhood. He should be involved in the activities of both the mosque and the school, and he should be ready to be involved in the organization of neighbourhood gatherings. He also added, obviously directed to certain youth present, that the person chosen should be ready to actively combat drug and alcohol abuse in the neighbourhood. This was followed by the speeches of representatives of different interest groups among the community's youth: a successful businessman, a school teacher, and a young *haj*. While they all provided opinions on the importance of this position, the speeches were actually thinly veiled campaign speeches because each of those who spoke were obviously candidates for the youth *zhigit beshi*. After this guidance, one of the other three elders then said that given this criteria, he suggested nominating a man by the name of Burkhan, who was a school teacher and known as an upstanding member of the community who frequented prayers at the mosque.

The nominee immediately declined the honour, as is expected in a show of modesty, but everybody in attendance supported the nomination until it was accepted as the final decision. Several other potential candidates present, including the eldest son of the family in which I lived, were visibly disappointed by the decision, but they tried their best not to show this. While the decision was essentially made by the group of three eldest men present and not by any kind of vote among the youth, it is interesting that the choice did reflect more or less the middle ground in the divergent ideals of Uyghur culture present in the community. It was decided to choose neither an especially religious man nor one who was obviously not religious. At the same time, it was decided not to choose one of the established businessmen in the community. Rather, the appointed youth *zhigit beshi* was a man who had respect in various quarters as an educator and a family man who was familiar with the practices of Islam without being a strong devotee.

As a way of further appeasing the other groups in the neighbourhood whose representatives were not chosen, it was then suggested that there be a few other lower-level *zhigit beshi* positions given to specific age groups. Various young men participating in the event offered ideas of how this should be done, and in the end it was decided to have two lesser *zhigit beshis* for certain age groups, and a treasurer.

13 A *haj* is a Muslim who has fulfilled his/her obligation to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. Such people have a high degree of respect in Uyghur communities and are honoured for their deep religiosity.

For the group of men in their late 20s and early 30s, one of the trader-businessmen was chosen, and a capable young man in his early 20s was chosen to represent those aged to 25. Finally, a young *haj* was chosen to be the treasurer. Once all positions had been assigned, the meeting was closed.

In general, this process, which was more of a verbal negotiation of positions of importance in the community than it was an actual election, represented a very open negotiation of the divergent cultural discourses in the neighbourhood. As already noted, the youth community leader, or *zhigit beshi*, was a person who could communicate across different youth groups in the community. For other top positions, an emergent businessman and a religious *haj* were chosen, indicating recognition of the importance of both religion and new market relations in the community. As was the case in the other examples I have discussed, therefore, this gathering again demonstrated the ways that this neighbourhood reconciles very different cultural ideals through active community practice and an on-going, but non-conflictual, competition for symbolic capital.

Conclusion

The examples of cultural negotiation provided above are significant for their lack of direct connection to any kind of political activity or nationalist movement. Rather, they were events from daily life in one Uyghur community within Almaty. These events and many others like them, however, provide a snapshot of the ways that the diverse Uyghur community in Almaty negotiated their commonalities and differences in the 1990s, a negotiation that was critical to the Uyghurs' ability to retain a strong nationalist consciousness and to continue to undertake political actions on behalf of their stateless nation. In the place of broad generalizations about such abstract concepts as the degree of religiosity or nationalism that are present in the community, such analysis of the expression and negotiation of cultural ideals and discourses in the context of community practices offers a more balanced and nuanced view of the reality of the Uyghurs' allegiances. It offers a way of discussing identity that is not tied to politically charged absolutisms and more accurately portrays the on-going process of identity construction.

The analyses provided here of community practices in *Zarya Vostoka*, however, do have their limitations in their applicability to the Uyghur people as a whole. Firstly, the events described above were obviously very gendered in nature and reflect my particular access to the male community in the neighbourhood. Similar analysis, however, could certainly be done of the many gatherings that were held specifically for the women of the neighbourhood. While the issues that were important to the women of *Zarya Vostoka* in their community practices might have differed from those most critical to the men, similar negotiations were undoubtedly being performed. Secondly, the analysis of neighbourhood practices in *Zarya Vostoka* is specific to the make-up of this community, which is a combination of Uyghur immigrants who came from China in the 1950s and 1960s and those Uyghur sojourners who have arrived in the last decade to trade at the nearby *Barakholka* bazaar. Thus, this community is very much caught between the realities of the new China and the new Kazakhstan.

Other communities that are more dominated by *yärlik* local Uyghurs who have lived in Kazakhstan for several generations have much stronger attachments to the Soviet past and include a more visible element of Soviet influences. Nonetheless, the processes of cultural negotiations in all these neighbourhoods are similar and inevitably involve negotiating a history that is simultaneously defined by events that have taken place in both China and the former U.S.S.R.

In negotiating this borderland history of the Uyghurs, these processes essentially produce a specific Uyghur social space for this diverse community that encompasses the Uyghur population's historical and cultural connections with both China and the former U.S.S.R. This Uyghur social space in many ways fills a certain void that most Uyghurs feel due to the lack of *their* own nation-state. In the absence of a Uyghur nation-state, local Uyghur communities, or *mähälläs*, have become the primary sites for the production of both national consciousness and a national ideal. In this sense, *Zarya Vostoka* and the many other Uyghur *mähälläs* that exist around the world in Kazakhstan, China, Turkey, Australia, Canada, and elsewhere are the Uyghurs' *Uyghurstan*, whether or not this imagined state is recognized by the United Nations. Furthermore, regardless of where these many local islands of *Uyghurstan* are located around the world, they inevitably to differing degrees are sites for the negotiation of a *nation* whose history is inescapably lodged between the realities of life in both the former Soviet Union and China.

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Chapter 12

'Ethnic Anomaly' or Modern Uyghur Survivor? A Case Study of the *Minkaohan* Hybrid Identity in Xinjiang

Joanne Smith Finley

Introduction

Owing to complex historical processes, the modern Uyghurs may be conceived as a people caught between Central Asia and the People's Republic of China on a number of levels, including political, economic, and socio-cultural. As an 'in-between' people, the group as a whole is obviously a fascinating subject for the study of identity formation and negotiation, as witnessed by the already sizeable body of knowledge on relational identities constructed against the Han (Gladney, 1994, 1996, 2004; Smith, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2007; Cesàro, 2000; Bellér-Hann, 2002; Bovingdon, 2002) and on intra-ethnic socio-cultural identities among rural and urban Uyghurs (Bellér-Hann, 1997, 1998, 2001; Rudelson, 1997; Clark, 2001). Yet though the *minkaohan* 民考汉 [Ch. Uyghurs educated in the Chinese language] arguably struggle hardest with this sense of 'in-between-ness', the complex self-identity of the group to date remains strangely unexplored.[1] Given the escalating urban trend of placing Uyghur children in Chinese-medium schools or classes and the socio-economic conditions that have produced it, this acute example of Uyghur hybridity constitutes an important direction for ongoing research.

Xinjiang has seen two waves or generations of *minkaohan*, emerging within very different political and socio-cultural environments. The first wave was essentially the product of repression of Uyghur (and all minority) culture during the politically 'red' Cultural Revolution period. These individuals enjoyed no control over their education. During the mid-sixties to mid-seventies, few Uyghur schools remained open and most children in urban areas were forced to attend Han schools.[2] There, they were taught in the Chinese language, which subsequently became their first language, though not their mother tongue. At the same time, the Arabic script traditionally used by the Islamized Uyghurs (known to contemporary Uyghurs as the Old Script or *kona yeziq*) was discontinued in favour of the New Script (*yengi yeziq*)

1 As this chapter goes to press, only one article has been published on the subject, see Taynen (2006).

2 Probably the best source of information on repression of minority cultures during the Cultural Revolution is Dreyer (1976).

based on the Latin alphabet.[3] The experience of many first-generation *minkaohan* was characterized by an acute sense of schizophrenia; a lack of belonging, either to the Chinese social world to which they were expected to assimilate, or to their own people among whom they felt themselves 'fakes'.

The second wave of *minkaohan* has grown up during the free market economy period amid accelerating Han migration to the region, and represents a conscious decision taken by urban parents to increase their children's life chances (higher education, employment, economic stability, social status) in a multi-ethnic society where equal opportunities are increasingly rare. As numerous informants in Ürümchi, both *minkaohan* and *minkaomin* 民考民 [Ch. Uyghurs educated in the Uyghur language], explained in 2004: 'A decade ago, private Han-run companies would only consider hiring *minkaohan* [not *minkaomin*]; now, many won't hire Uyghurs full stop.' For this second wave, then, there has been an element of choice, albeit within a socio-economic environment that seems to point to only one course of action.[4]

Today's *minkaohan* grow up in Uyghur families, where they are normally given a traditional education in Uyghur socio-cultural practices, conceived here as one branch of Central Asian practices. Many of these practices have been deeply penetrated by Islam.[5] Upon reaching school age they attend Han schools, where Chinese gradually replaces Uyghur as their first language and where they are exposed to contrastive Chinese notions of *wenhua* 文化 [Ch. culture], including different attitudes to education, social and gender relations, religion and so on. The transfer affects individuals in different ways, producing a myriad of 'types' on a broad spectrum of hybrid cultural combinations. For some, the experience produces a sense of shame regarding their minority background – temporary or permanent – or cultural lack, as it did for first generation *minkaohan*. Others enjoy more positive identities, considering themselves 'modern', 'progressive' and 'internationalist'.[6] Generally, they may experience all of these emotions, at once or at different times. Upon leaving education, *minkaohan* enter adult life to find that their partial sinicization can earn them only partial entrance to the sphere of Han privilege, with

3 See Bellér-Hann (1991) on the history of script changes in Xinjiang.

4 This looks set to change over the next decade as the controversial policy of 'bilingual education' once more marks a shift away from egalitarian policies, see Uyghur Human Rights Project (2007).

5 In most parts of Central Asia, religious and cultural practices have become deeply intertwined, cf. *Xinjiang ribao*, Ürümchi, 10 September 1996 in SWB (Asia Pacific), 10 February 1997, FE/2839 G/6 on the evolution of national customs with Islamic roots into everyday Uyghur habits and practices.

6 In contemporary Kazakhstan, where the Russian-speaking identity among Kazakhs is several decades more mature and established than the emerging Chinese-speaking identity among Xinjiang Uyghurs, young 'cosmopolitan' Kazakhs prefer the Russian-language press to the Kazakh-language press. They consider it a better medium for acquiring information from the outside world and more suited to their upbringing in an 'international' *milieu* (Dave, 1996: 56).

access increasing in proportion to the degree of sinicization but not guaranteed.[7] At the same time, the two worlds they span are fundamentally divided by inter-ethnic tension and conflict and they are, after all, considered neither (wholly) Uyghur by *minkaomin* nor wholly Chinese by Hans.

A direct parallel may be drawn between these sinicized Uyghurs and their Central Asian neighbours the Russified Kazakhs, product first of the language and cultural policies of Tsarist Russia and then of Soviet nationality policies. As Surucu has observed: 'Empires have a bad habit of surviving their physical demise. They breed a peculiar way of thinking, implant their unique dispositions and nurture conflicting loyalties and fragmented identities' (2002, 385). If the Uyghurs are a people presently caught between Central Asia and the People's Republic of China, then the Kazakhs were for much of the last century a people caught between Central Asia and Tsarist/Soviet Russia, and that experience has left a cultural and psychological legacy. As such, they constitute an important precedent and vehicle for comparison in studies of Xinjiang's *minkaohan*. As early as 1789, the first institutes of higher education began to provide a Russian education for children of the Kazakh aristocracy, their aim 'to facilitate the rapprochement of Asiatics to Russians' (Akiner, 1995: 26). Quickly followed by the establishment of mixed Russo-Kazakh primary schools, these ensured dissemination of the Russian language and culture, especially in areas where concentrations of Russian settlers were high. Among the first generation of Kazakhs to receive a Russian education was a group of cultural and political mobilizers known as the 'enlighteners', active from the mid-1800s. While championing 'pure' (pre-Islamic) Kazakh traditions, they were positive towards the union with Russia, believing that Kazakhs needed to learn Russian in order to access a 'modern' European education and that Russian culture was the key to progress. Two generations later, however, another group of Russian-educated Kazakh intellectuals, the 'bourgeois nationalists', were less impressed by the European world and had learned to absorb only what they deemed useful while redefining their identity within the Russian empire on their own terms (Akiner, 1995: 29–32).

From the 1920s, the Marxist-Leninist nationality policies of the Soviet Union (which would later provide a model for Mao's China) introduced a 'dual emphasis' on identification both with the Soviet state and with the national group. The Kazakh language was quickly fitted into the supranational Soviet framework through the use of the common Cyrillic script, but an aggressive programme of 'cultural colonization' (including the introduction of atheistic education) was needed to effect change in Kazakh self-identity, which was permeated with Islamic institutions. It is a direct reflection of the dual Soviet/national emphasis that many Kazakhs during this period described themselves as 'atheists but also Muslims' (Akiner, 1995: 48). Over time, much of the knowledge and skills prized by Kazakhs for centuries came to be considered 'primitive' and useless. In the 1970s, the Brezhnev leadership further

7 Thus, assimilation may not be possible even if the majority group language is learned by minority group members. A similar experience is reported by Russian-speaking, non-Kazakh minorities in contemporary Kazakhstan. They claim that they face enmity even if they learn the Kazakh language, and are still not treated as 'one of us' (see Barrington, 2001: 138).

promoted the idea of a 'Soviet people' and devoted huge resources to the teaching of Russian to non-Russians. Like Stalin, it viewed the Russian language as a type of 'linguistic glue' that would bind the many Soviet peoples together (Fierman, 1995: 507). In the mid-1980s, though a quarter of the population of Alma-Ata were ethnic Kazakhs, the city had only one or two Kazakh-medium secondary schools (Fierman, 1998: 175). By this time, Kazakhs were already among the most 'Sovietized' of Soviet citizens, and the urban youth knew only a handful of colloquial phrases in the Kazakh language.[8] Yet despite the emergence of a 'Russian-speaking' group of ethnic Kazakhs, awareness of a specifically Kazakh identity persisted and young people generally named Kazakh as their mother tongue (Akiner, 1995: 51–2).

In independent Kazakhstan today, where there has been a state-sponsored revival of the Kazakh language,[9] the emotional relationship of urban, Russian-speaking Kazakhs to the two languages – as well as to the titular ethnic group – remains contradictory. While some feel a sense of deprivation regarding their limited command of the mother tongue (Akiner, 1995: 58), others continue to associate Kazakh with 'backwardness' and stigma (Nazpary, 2002: 155–6). Kazakh attitudes towards Russification have thus long been ambiguous, shifting subtly across generations and in relation to changing circumstances; they appear generally, however, to have been more positive than Uyghur responses to sinicization.[10]

8 cf. the Uzbek saying that in order to turn an Uzbek into a Russian you must first turn him into a Kazakh (Fierman, 1998: 173).

9 It is ironic that while this revival necessitates a knowledge of the Kazakh language for all state sector jobs, decades of decay within the educational infrastructure means that many ambitious parents have been forced to transfer their children from Kazakh schools back to Russian schools owing to lack of resources, in particular, the lack of teachers with Kazakh language skills (Nazpary, 2002: 153–4).

10 One explanation may be that from the early eighteenth century, Kazakh rulers were willing to allow Russian political and economic influence to spread in return for Russia's help in defending their territories against Kazakh and non-Kazakh rivals (Fierman, 1998: 173). A second is that when Kazakhs were presented with the Soviet 'modernization' project, most were still pastoral nomads or semi-nomads and the Kazakh language had had only a short history as a written language (literacy stood at just 7 per cent in 1926). Thus, the Kazakhs' world, formerly bounded by personal experience, suddenly gained new horizons, and some Kazakhs at least appear to have wanted to distance themselves from their nomadic past, lured by the promise of modernity (see Akiner, 1995: 40–1, 50). Thirdly, Kazakhstan has been characterized (by both 'cosmopolitans' and nationalists) as the 'cradle of the idea of Eurasianism', the point where European and Asian civilizations meet. Today's cosmopolitans argue that Kazakhstan is destined to be at the heart of the cultural, spiritual and moral unity of the Slavic and Turkic communities. Representing themselves as progressive, modern, secular and urban-based (compared with the backward, Islamic and rural Kazakh nationalists), they view Russia as the agent of modernization in modern Kazakh history. Kazakh nationalists, while distancing themselves from the sins of the ex-colonial powers, nonetheless see the Kazakh historical legacy (nomadic society) as one based on pluralism, tolerance, diversity and progress (Surucu, 2002: 391, 394).

Theoretical Framework: Borrowings from Anthropology, Psychology and Sociology

How can we begin to illustrate theoretically the micro-diversity of such 'in-between' identities?[11] The term 'ethnic anomalies', coined by Eriksen (1993: 62), is instructive. He applies it to those who are 'betwixt and between' (borrowing this phrase from Victor Turner). Typical 'anomalous' categories include children of 'mixed' couples, and the children – and grandchildren – of immigrants in Europe. The former are frequently classed in pejorative terms – 'half-caste' (*erzhuanzi* 二转子 in the Chinese context).[12] The latter are often bilingual in their mother tongue and in the national language of the host country. Each may experience conflicting cultural loyalties, and find themselves caught between the possibilities of assimilation to the dominant group (where this is an option) or ethnic incorporation. Perhaps, then, the term 'ethnic anomalies' might also be used to characterize children from one ethnic group educated in the language and cultural practices of a culturally distant colonizer? It is useful here to examine Mary Douglas's concepts of anomaly and ambiguity.

Douglas defines anomaly as 'an element which does not fit a given set or series' and ambiguity as 'a character of statements capable of two interpretations' (1964: 38). The two terms, she observes, are difficult to distinguish in their practical application, presenting the example of treacle. Treacle is neither solid nor liquid. It gives an ambiguous sense impression, while being anomalous in the classification of both solids and liquids. When something is classed as anomalous, she continues, the outline of the set or sets to which it does not belong is clarified. Certainly, human beings can force themselves to confront ambiguity (rather than allowing their schematizing tendencies to prevail), but this may be a pleasant or unpleasant experience. Negatively, she writes, we may ignore anomalies, or perceiving them, we may condemn. Positively, we may allow a new pattern to evolve in which the anomaly has a place. Though culture provides some basic categories through which a group's ideas and values are ordered and reproduced, its rigidity must, as with any system of classification, give rise to anomalies. The culture (or cultures) in question usually have provisions for dealing with these, and Douglas lists them as follows:

1. Reduce ambiguity by settling for one or the other interpretation (solid or liquid);[13]
2. Physically control the anomaly;
3. Avoid the anomalous in order to strengthen the categories to which it does not conform;

11 The term 'micro-diversity', coined by Naomi Zack (1995: ix), refers to internal diversity of socio-cultural norms within the individual, in contrast to the term 'cultural diversity', used to refer to the diversity of ethnic categories and sets of socio-cultural practices within a society.

12 Eriksen (1993: 64) gives the example of Trinidadians with one African and one Indian parent, labelled *douglas*, a Bhojpuri word meaning 'bastard'.

13 See Satris (1995: 54) on how Japanese Americans sent to internment camps in Arkansas during World War II were encouraged by whites to sit in the front of the bus (while blacks sat at the back), yet regarded by blacks as coloured brethren and expected to stand with them against the whites.

4. Label the anomaly 'dangerous';
5. Use ambiguous symbols in ritual in order to enrich meaning (for example poetry, mythology) (1964: 40–1).

Accepting as a basic premise that cultures will normally react with anxiety to the advent of ethnic anomalies that do not fit their system of ethnic classifications, what effects might this have on the identity formation of the 'anomalies' themselves?

In a chapter on biracial identity formation in Zack's (1995) volume on mixed race in America, Helena Jia Hershel describes a socio-psychological process of identity wounding that rings true with emotions expressed by my *minkaohan* respondents. Hershel (1995: 169) follows earlier scholars in characterizing identity formation as an individual and a collective process.[14] This process is influenced throughout one's life by personal and public relationships, and by broader social, cultural and racial attitudes. Belonging, so fundamental to human survival, becomes important especially when exclusion (lack of acceptance) is communicated, causing the individual to wonder: 'Where do I fit in?' In the case of biracial – and indeed bicultural or culturally micro-diverse individuals – the lack of acceptance may emanate from one or both main categories (groups) at different times.[15] Each identification, as Hershel points out, will confer a different set of advantages and disadvantages. Further, where there is tension between the two main groups, the bi-racial (bi-cultural) individual may become internally conflicted because of 'the need to protect one's self from social or racial discord' (Hershel, 1995: 172). Or, as Eriksen puts it, they may find it psychologically and socially difficult to 'bet on two horses' (1993: 63).

Where status is arbitrarily determined by the two main categories, or denied by both, individuals may begin to doubt their sense of self. Hershel (1995: 174–5) cites the case of a young Asian American male, who sought acceptance from Asians because he saw that white students discriminated against Asian students and had suffered such discrimination himself. He thus adopted performance criteria that would enable membership in Asian groups. Yet he found himself rejected by some Asians, who found it hard to place him, and this further increased his sense of isolation. Like Mary Douglas, Hershel observes that an ambiguous individual who does not fit in to prescribed stereotypes can evoke an anxious, ambiguous response in people whose main psychological defence is to categorize (Hershel, 1995: 176). The biracial person may in response try to 'pass' (defined here as pretending that one is a member of only one category). When attempting to pass as a member of the majority, however, they may be condemned by the minority group for 'identifying with the oppressor' (Hershel, 1995: 179). This in turn carries risks, since an individual may identify not only with the associated privileges but also with the oppressor's projections of inferiority: it is the internalization of such projections, explains Hershel, which constitutes 'internalized oppression'.

14 Compare Epstein, for whom ethnic identity formation involves psychological and social elements or 'the interplay of the external and the internal' (1978: 112).

15 In a chapter on Mestizo identity, Alcoff frames this as an 'unresolvable status ambiguity' (1995: 259).

Yet as both Hershel (1995: 169) and Eriksen (1993: 66) remind us, we should not assume that 'ethnic anomalies' are by default unhappy. A more positive incarnation of ethnic and cultural ambiguity is found in Stuart Hall's reflections on identity politics and hybridity. Discussing Afro-Caribbean identity in Britain, Hall (1996: 130–1) notes a shift away from identities constructed *in response* to the system of ethnic/racial classifications imposed by majority groups and institutions. He argues that this dialectic of identity formation – or 'conversation around social positioning' – produced in the past a series of 'counter-identifications' rather than identities, a tendency for blacks to think that because they are seen as black, so they are black, and can only speak with one voice. For Hall, the hybridization of different cultural forces in a world of migrated peoples must produce a new era in which everyone will live with the fact that 'there are no pure origins left' (1996: 134). At the end of the twentieth century, black identities in Britain are entering a double or multiple consciousness in which one identity can be played off situationally against another. He writes: '...what you are seeing now... is blacks increasingly understanding the multiplicity of identities that they are going to need to get from one side of the street to another' (Hall, 1996: 133).[16] But have Xinjiang's *minkaohan* reached the point where they can manipulate their cultural hybridity situationally?

A Case Study

My case study focuses on one Uyghur woman, whom I will call Räwiä, and members of her family and friends. It covers a period of ten years. When I met Räwiä in 1995, she was in her mid-thirties, and one of the first wave of *minkaohan*. By the present time, she has entered her forties. Her husband is also *minkaohan*, but their teenage daughter is *minkaomin*. Data presented in this chapter derives from the year I spent observing and interacting with Räwiä and her family during 1995–96, and from subsequent interviews conducted during trips to Xinjiang in 2002 and 2004. Conversations were conducted in Uyghur and Chinese.

Although Räwiä's family originated from south Xinjiang, she and her brother grew up in the regional capital Ürümchi. When they were young, their mother went to work for the Cultural Revolution, and was too busy to teach them their mother tongue – they would often stay overnight at kindergarten. Räwiä learned the Uyghur language only after going to university; similarly, their mother taught Räwiä's brother the Uyghur alphabet only after he had reached the age of 26. He taught himself to read the Arabic script via Uyghur language newspapers and improved his listening skills by watching Uyghur language television.

16 Alcoff likens this identity negotiation to 'living the gap' and ceasing to 'seek a permanent home onshore' (1995: 278).

Linguistic and Cultural 'Dilution'[17]

For Räwiä, the linguistic and cultural legacy of a Han education persists; her level of spoken Uyghur is lower advanced rather than native. At meetings, she takes notes in Chinese characters, and her Uyghur dictionary is in the New Script. She and her *minkaohan* husband and friends frequently speak in Chinese, or a mixture of Chinese and Uyghur, though no Han Chinese are present.[18] Once, after attending an all-*minkaohan* birthday party, Räwiä explained: 'We usually speak Uyghur until we can't express something we want to say; then we get impatient and break into Chinese. Because we're *minkaohan*, you see'. Code-switching – inter-sentential and intra-sentential – apparently occurred at an unconscious level. One evening, when I commented on it, the reaction of Räwiä and her three *minkaohan* friends was defensive and bitter: 'That's why they call us the fourteenth nationality! That's who we are!'[19]

Her weak command of the Uyghur language affected Räwiä's ability to participate effectively in Uyghur society. Her close circle of friends was composed of *minkaohan*, not *minkaomin*. She found it difficult to enjoy Uyghur song and thus a strain to attend *olturush* (social gatherings characterized by song, dance and joke-telling).[20] She often appeared consternated when I turned up at her house with my latest Uyghur music purchase. She would turn the volume down with a slight frown, and once remarked: 'Have you noticed how Uyghur music is all geared towards dancing?' As a child, she had not learned traditional Uyghur dance at home and had had no opportunity to do so at her Han school. This, coupled with her imperfect grasp of the language, made Uyghur song less accessible to her than to a *minkaomin*. One evening, she and some *minkaohan* friends got together with a *dutar* (two-stringed lute) and tried to sing and play Uyghur songs. The act did not come naturally and much giggling and joking ensued. The women stopped and started in the middle of songs, and chided their failure. On another occasion, Räwiä asked to borrow some

17 Alcoff complains that left-wing observers often treat 'mixed' individuals as 'symbols of colonial aggression or cultural dilution' (1995: 260), invoking the image published in a national newspaper of a Native American straddling a snowmobile, which drew protestations from educated Anglos about the 'tragic demise of a cultural identity' (1995: 264). Wishing to avoid this charge, I deliberately problematize the term 'dilution' and record that I use it without any associated negative meanings.

18 The Russified Kazakhs provide a parallel. According to Dave, pupils who have been transferred from Russian- to Kazakh-medium schools in the wake of independence 'habitually think and compose texts in Russian, and subsequently translate them into Kazakh' (1996: 68).

19 Compare Anzaldua's Chicano: 'In the Gringo world, the Chicano suffers from excessive humility and self-effacement, shame of self and self-deprecation. Around Latinos he suffers from a sense of language inadequacy and its accompanying discomfort' (cited in Alcoff, 1995: 275). Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong (1980) recorded a total of fifty-six nationalities in China with thirteen in Xinjiang, hence the label 'fourteenth nationality'.

20 Such gatherings often double as rotating savings and credit associations or ROSCAs (see Ardener and Burman, 1995).

cassettes from me, as though the sight of me enjoying Uyghur music had somehow pricked her conscience.

Though – or perhaps because – Räwiä herself was uncomfortable with Uyghur performing arts, she encouraged her daughter to learn Uyghur dance from an early age, and lauded her achievements in all areas of traditional culture. The daughter went regularly to her grandmother's house for coaching in Uyghur language and script (ironically, Räwiä's mother was a retired teacher of Uyghur language); it was there too that she learned the rudiments of how to pray. The grandmother's house was the perfect environment in which to build Uyghur cultural awareness, its décor typically Central Asian, all carpets, crochet and lace. Compare this with Räwiä's plain Chinese-style *loufang* (楼房) apartment, with no *karawat* [Uy: raised platform for eating and sleeping] and no mounted carpets, mirrors, crystal or precious metals – in short, none of the coveted Uyghur sparkle. This different concept of aesthetics was also reflected in Räwiä's personal style – her hair was shoulder length rather than long, she did not use henna and she wore plain rather than sparkly textiles.

Räwiä maintained an objective distance regarding Islamic practices, particularly those governing gender relations. Like other *minkaohan* friends, she would sometimes complain about the pressures exerted on women by Islamic social norms. She had regular squalls with her husband, usually caused by her refusal to give him 'face'. Once, for instance, she came to my house in tears after he became furious with her for declining to get up at 1am and cook for his friends.[21] Despite not knowing how to pray and feeling a lack of fit with certain Islamic cultural practices, Räwiä nonetheless maintained a sense of religiosity. This could be observed in the retention of notions of fatalism, so that she often spoke in terms of *Khuda's* [Allah's] will. Describing her miscarriage at an advanced age after trying for some time for a second child, she said: 'Khuda bärmidi... bärdi... yänä eliwaldi' ['At first, Allah didn't give, then he gave, but finally he took away again'].

One final aspect of cultural 'dilution' was Räwiä's dislike of the practice of 'house-hopping'. Uyghurs often berate the tendency of modern Ürümchi folk to shut themselves away and spurn their neighbours, blaming this on assimilation of bad social habits from the Hans (rather than urbanization and resultant social atomization). Unsurprisingly, this accusation is particularly directed at *minkaohan*.

'Internalized Oppression' and Ethnic Ambivalence

In many first-generation *minkaohan*, one can observe partial internalization of negative socio-cultural projections by Han Chinese.[22] For Räwiä, these were strongest when she was young. She reported ambivalent feelings as a teenager at a Han school.

21 Some *minkaohan* men have also departed from traditional gender roles and can even be found in the kitchen. This has earned them the insult usually reserved for Han men – *saymakhun* [a man who fears his wife]. Räwiä's husband, however, was no *saymakhun*.

22 This phenomenon is not limited to *minkaohan*; poorly educated *minkaomin* may show similar signs. Again, compare the Russified Kazakhs, who even today retain ambiguous feelings towards the Kazakh language, experiencing shame of their 'backward' mother tongue alongside an increasing sense of cultural loss.

On one hand, her minority status within a group officially described as 'backward' in relation to the 'advanced' Han gave rise to a sense of shame, especially during this Cultural Revolution period when minority culture was persecuted. On the other, her teachers' encouragement regarding her academic progress simultaneously afforded a sense of pride in being Uyghur. She explained:

> When I was fifteen and at middle school [1976], I felt ashamed to be Uyghur. I used to think: "Why wasn't I born a Han?" You see, I went to a Han school. But my teacher liked me because I worked hard and did well. The Han teachers would point us Uyghur kids out as a good example and say to the Han kids: "Why can't you study well like them?" Now I don't feel ashamed in that way.

Certainly, when I commented on the lively traditions associated with collecting a Uyghur bride, the 34-year-old Räwiä was quick to acknowledge the positive trait: 'You see, we've still got that ethnic spirit (Ch. *minzugan* 民族感) – what a beautiful nation of people! If we didn't have that spirit, we'd be dead and lifeless by now. You can't necessarily see it outwardly, but it's there in our hearts.' This said, she regularly made remarks that suggested she was ashamed of her ethnic group. Consider the following comment, made as we discussed perceived collaborationism: 'Sometimes I think our people are really pitiful; I look at Uyghurs hired to play *sunay* (a woodwind instrument) and *naghra* (a type of drum) at shop openings and I feel embarrassed for them. I think "What good will that shop do for you? Will *you* buy the goods inside?"' Later in the same conversation, she complained: 'Our leaders are miserable. Why don't they speak out? They're politicians, no-one's going to execute them! But they are all Yes-men, compromisers [...] .'

Räwiä's brother displayed similar ambivalence. Sometimes he would make comments that strongly evoked negative Han projections found in official discourses. Consider his response to the attempts of the Chinese authorities to limit my movements: 'If the government doesn't want you to go to the countryside, it's because they're thinking of your safety... Uyghur people are quite savage [Ch. *yeman* 野蛮], you know!' Though Räwiä protested that he shouldn't call Uyghurs 'savage', he persisted, citing as an example individuals who participated in recent riots in Khotän. Räwiä later observed that he was 'talking just as the government talks'. Yet on another occasion, he fiercely defended his ethnic group: 'We never lost our traditions! The Cultural Revolution made no difference. We had to go to Han schools because there were no Uyghur schools, that's all!'

Inequalities and Ethnic Affinity

Despite early signs of internalized oppression, Räwiä was by her mid-thirties alive to the sense of injustice felt by many Uyghurs in the face of perceived social and economic inequalities (my use of the word 'perceived' does not suggest that those inequalities do not exist). After over a decade of working closely with Han colleagues, she was acutely aware of Han chauvinism, and this had drawn her once more toward her own people. In private, she would say scathingly: 'I don't care how much propaganda they put out about ethnic equality and nationality unity;

everyone can use their eyes, can't they?' She even joked that guilt had made her Han colleagues paranoid:

> Every time we speak in front of the Hans, they think we're saying something nasty about them! If we sing a song, they think it's a mockery of them! It's a sure sign of a guilty conscience; in Chinese they say *zuozeixinxu* 做贼心虚 [Thieves have a guilty conscience]. They think we hate them because they stole our land!

Significantly, she used 'They' for the Han Chinese and 'We' for the Uyghurs, and clearly identified with the latter.[23]

By 2004, socio-economic inequalities in Xinjiang had escalated dramatically. Räwiä told me: 'I used to say that all we could do was fight for ethnic equality; now all we can do is fight to put the meals on the table. It's a question of survival.' These injustices and related social problems emerging within the Uyghur community had led to Räwiä's further realignment with her minority status. Talking about the escort girl phenomenon (*sanpei xiaojie*, young women accompanying or sleeping with Han men for money, usually *minkaomin*), she displayed strengthened ethnic self-esteem and a willingness to promote this in others: 'These girls have no sense of ethnic responsibility, ethnic self-respect; it makes me depressed, but what can you do? These are other people's children. All we can do is watch and guide our own children carefully, then use our ideas to try to influence those around us.'

The *Minkaohan-Minkaomin* Divide

The ambivalence characteristic of the *minkaohan* experience means that both Han Chinese and other Uyghurs can have difficulty placing them. When making social introductions, *minkaomin* often classify their companions (and themselves) in terms of whether they are *minkaohan* or *minkaomin*, implying that *minkaohan* constitute a separate category. Secretly, many *minkaomin* state that *minkaohan* are 'not entirely Uyghur', and label them 'Xinjiang's fourteenth nationality' or even 'China's fifty-seventh nationality'. They claim that, owing to close association with Han classmates, *minkaohan* have developed cultural characteristics more commonly associated with Hans, such as for example the failure to follow (Uyghur) norms of hospitality. Such characteristics are normally negatively perceived.[24] Most significant is the suggestion that *minkaohan* end up acquiring the 'Han disposition' (*Khänzu mijäz*), defined as a tendency to speak directly (and tactlessly) compared with the Uyghur tendency to imply meanings. On the other hand, Uyghur motives are generally characterized as straightforward, while those of Han are characterized

23 Compare Akiner's description of the late eighties civil rights activist Olzha Suleimenov: 'a Kazakh who spoke and wrote in Russian and was in many ways more at home in a Russian environment than a Kazakh one, yet at the same time had sufficient love and knowledge of the history of his people to feel deeply indignant at the manner in which they were so often portrayed as culturally inferior, less developed than the Russians' (1995: 56–7).

24 Similarly, Kazakh nationalists blame the lack of culture associated with alcohol consumption and disrespect for elders on the evils of Russian colonialism (see Dave, 1996: 66).

as devious. The assumed internalization of the Han disposition, conceived in these terms, means that *minkaomin* often interpret bad behaviour directly as a manifestation of a person's *minkaohan* status, uttering in embarrassed tones: 'I don't understand *minkaohan* at all. They're nothing like us!'

Minkaomin may measure the acceptability of *minkaohan* in terms of religiosity. This is especially the case in the current climate of religious renewal in Xinjiang. Two 18-year-old *minkaomin* – one male, one female – about to enter university explained in 2004 that they would steer clear of a person sinicized to such a degree that he or she did not involve *Khuda* in discussions of future possibility.

Minkaomin Uyghurs with strong ethno-nationalist views or deep religious beliefs are particularly likely to view *minkaohan* as ethnic and cultural 'traitors' who have forsaken their native language and culture. This situation has been observed for some time in contemporary Kazakhstan, where Kazakh nationalists employ the term *mankurt* against their Sovietized and Russified urban brethren, associate their 'internationalism' with the old regime, and disapprove of their 'cultural amnesia' and proclivity towards the 'chauvinistic' [Russian-language] media (Dave, 1996: 52, 56; Surucu, 2002: 385, 397).

Many *minkaomin* think that, having formed friendships with Hans at school, *minkaohan* must be prone to collaborating with them in a direct, political sense. This assumption is reflected in the way in which one *minkaomin* respondent introduced me to a good friend (*minkaohan*): 'This is X. Don't worry, although he is *minkaohan*, he hates Hans as much as anyone else!' This suspicion may be further fuelled by the fact that many *minkaohan* work in places where there is potential for collaboration.[25] Räwiä, for instance, admitted that she frequently translated foreign essays on the Uyghur for her work unit and, ultimately, for the Chinese government. I once observed her brother warn her against such close alignment with the Han, saying: 'What do you want to help *them* for? What happens when the next Cultural Revolution comes along?' Hearing this, Räwiä became defensive and pointed out that if she did not do it, someone else would – a response that directly indicts perceived collaborationist tendencies among the Uyghurs. Yet at the same time she confessed to 'feeling like a tool' and wanting to stop. Such were her difficulties in trying to position herself politically between the two groups.[26]

Bizdäk Bolmisun ('Don't Let Them End Up Like Us')

In the mid-nineties, some first-generation *minkaohan*, aware of the linguistic and cultural consequences of a Han education, chose to send their own children

25 cf. in the United States, biracial and bilingual individuals are today recruited by the US military and the F.B.I to infiltrate gangs, communities, and countries suspected of subversion (Alcoff, 1995: 276).

26 Alcoff writes: '...for mixed-race persons, especially those who have suffered some degree of rejection from the communities to which they have some attachment, such jobs hold a seductive attraction as a way to overcome feelings of inferiority and to find advantage for the first time in the situation of being mixed' (1995: 276).

to Uyghur schools.[27] This pro-active return to tradition was often sustained by the grandparents, who came to play an important role as cultural anchor.[28] At that time, Räwiä mentioned four reasons why she had placed her daughter in a Uyghur school:

1. She was afraid that the child would be bullied by Han schoolmates;
2. Han teachers seemed reluctant to accept Uyghur children into their classes;
3. She was afraid that the child would lose her mother tongue ('I want my daughter to learn Uyghur first, Chinese second');
4. As a *minkaohan*, she could not coach her child in the Uyghur language, and recognized the need for teachers fluent in Uyghur.

The mix of reasons suggested both a wariness of Han discrimination and a fear of linguistic and cultural assimilation. By 2004, the second had come to dominate. Räwiä expressed exasperation at the growing urban trend of sending Uyghur children to Han schools: 'Who are these people who say "The Uyghur language is of no use [*paydisi yoq*]?" What kind of talk is that? They are contributing to the disappearance of our mother tongue.' Her daughter had grown into a young *minkaomin* woman with perfect command of Uyghur and excellent Chinese. She prayed each day at home, mouthing the words though she did not know the actions, and disapproved of inter-ethnic courtships she observed at school. Räwiä felt she had made the right decision: 'My daughter is everything I wanted her to be.'[29] The two women explained how the *minkaomin* daughter taught Räwiä and her husband new Uyghur vocabulary, while the *minkaohan* parents coached the daughter in Chinese.[30] At the age of forty three, Räwiä herself looked different. She had red streaks of henna in her hair and wore a sparkly dress. I remarked that she looked more typically Uyghur than she had ten years before. She responded: 'As a person gets older, she has to find herself. But notice that the dress is knee-length and I wear it sleeveless!' While Räwiä's development had clearly been steered by external conditions to a significant degree, the transition perhaps also reflected an evitable process within the life cycle.

27 This trend is also observable in post-independence Kazakhstan, where state sponsorship of the Kazakh language provides an extra valuable incentive. While some parents are transferring their children to Kazakh schools as a result of in-group pressure or in pursuit of new opportunities, others do so as a means of 'emotional compensation' and reaffirmation of ethnic pride (Dave, 1996: 64, 68).

28 See Epstein (1978: 148) on grandparents as a symbol of cultural continuity.

29 Females are generally under greater pressure to be 'good' (in the sense of culturally complete) Uyghurs than are males. Due to their central role in childcare and early (family) education, they are expected, like women in many other cultures, to assume responsibility as 'culture bearers' across generations.

30 cf. Dave (1996: 64), who relates how a Kazakh-educated wife and daughter deliberately spoke to their Russian-speaking husband/father in Kazakh to allow him to practise the language.

Revisiting 'Ethnic Anomalies'

In the light of Räwiä's story, might Eriksen's term 'ethnic anomaly' be applied to the *minkaohan* case? Considering his first category of anomaly – children of 'mixed' parentage – we must concede that, though experiences of ambiguity may be strikingly similar, the concept is not strictly analogous. Although *minkaohan* are suspended to varying degrees between two socio-cultural systems, their parents are both Uyghur and so the child – racially at least – belongs to one group. This category would correspond more accurately to *erzhuanzi* or children of one Uyghur and one Han parent (or any other combination). These individuals too constitute an important area for future studies of cultural hybridity. Looking at the second category – the children and grandchildren of immigrants – a closer analogy may be drawn. These are individuals whose parents or grandparents immigrated into the space and contrastive culture of the majority group; here, I apply the term to children growing up in a space once dominated by their parents' or grandparents' cultural norms but now colonized by a contrastive majority culture. In other words, the new culture has immigrated into the physical territory of the indigenous culture and established dominance.[31] Though migration dynamics are different, the resulting systems of majority/minority classification and politics of socio-economic stratification are surely comparable. Moreover, inequality is all the more insufferable when experienced in one's own homeland.

Though Eriksen's categories are produced by rather different social processes, I would argue that the *minkaohan* experience of in-between-ness and conflicting cultural affinities nonetheless reflects to a considerable extent that of biracial individuals or children of immigrant parents. Like biracial or culturally micro-diverse individuals, *minkaohan* do not fit neatly into either main culture – Uyghur/Central Asian or Han Chinese – and are potentially capable of conceiving two interpretations of any given situation. They evoke an impression of ambiguity which bothers others who fit neatly in to one group. At least four of Douglas's methods for dealing with ambiguity may be observed in Xinjiang:

1. Both Uyghurs and Hans may try to reduce ambiguity by acting as though the *minkaohan* is wholly Uyghur (thus, Central Asian) or wholly Chinese (cf. Uyghur parents who insist their *minkaohan* child speaks Uyghur in the home; Hans who 'play up' the degree of sinicization in the *minkaohan* colleague);
2. Uyghurs may try to physically control the anomaly (cf. rejection of Han schools as a means to prevent assimilation;[32] the taboo on intermarriage);

31 Though I recognize that the question of indigeneity is problematic, I note that perceptions of indigeneity are relative – in this context, Uyghurs are certainly in a position to say 'We were here first,' at least in large numbers. Here again we find a strong parallel with the experience of the Kazakhs, whose homeland was colonized by Russian settlers and subsequently the Russian culture.

32 The threat cannot be eliminated in full as modern urban children must, on departing from the Uyghur family home, circulate in a predominantly Chinese socio-cultural environment where Chinese is spoken as the 'national unifying language'.

3. *Minkaomin* Uyghurs may opt to avoid the anomalous (cf. the tendency to befriend other *minkaomin* rather than *minkaohan*);[33]
4. *Minkaomin* Uyghurs may label the anomaly 'dangerous' (cf. accusations of collaborationism).

Thus, like biracial and bicultural (or culturally micro-diverse) individuals, *minkaohan* will sometimes be identified – and identify with – their majority status as quasi-Han, and sometimes with their minority status as Uyghurs. Much of the time, they will experience exclusion from both categories and find it easier to mix with their own.

In addition, the potential for psychological conflict is great due to the high level of political and socio-cultural discord in contemporary Xinjiang. In a sense, *minkaohan* may be in a more marginalized position than biracial individuals in that they are rarely able to 'pass'. They cannot normally pass as Han Chinese because of greatly differing physical (racial) attributes (skin and hair colour; high nose, shape of the eyes, and so on) and, when attempting to do so, may be condemned by other Uyghurs for identifying with their oppressors. These physical differences ensure that, while welcoming the comparative sinicization (acculturation) of *minkaohan*, most Hans continue to perceive Uyghur colleagues and neighbours as less civilized, even 'dark' peoples and as inferior members of the family of nationalities headed by the Han 'big brother'. At the same time, *minkaohan* can rarely pass as *minkaomin* – widely seen as 'real Uyghurs' – due to their tendency to code-switch between languages and other perceived cultural ineptitudes. Just as in societies defined by racialized identities, in Xinjiang's climate of sharply polarized (and politicized) cultural identities, *minkaohan* may be simultaneously rejected as inferior by the dominant group and disliked by the oppressed group for their 'closer association with domination' (compare Alcoff, 1995: 259).

Conclusion: From 'Ethnic Anomaly' to Modern Uyghur Survivor

As a child growing up during the Cultural Revolution, Räwiä can be seen to have identified with the privileges of her oppressor, excelling within the Han education system. Initially, she appears to have internalized Han projections of Uyghur inferiority, yet once she had entered the Han-dominated workplace she gradually developed an awareness of Han chauvinism and a sense of injustice regarding ethnic inequalities. By the time I knew her in her mid-thirties, though she stopped short of desiring secession for Xinjiang, she had become determined to pursue equality for Uyghurs, with whom she now clearly identified. Her sense of ethnic affinity had strengthened in direct response to her perceptions of ethnic discrimination. Thus, on one level it might be described as a *reactive* identity.[34] Despite this strengthened ethnic

33 For this reason, *minkaohan* often end up befriending and marrying other *minkaohan*, though this may be a deliberate choice based on a common sense of liminality.

34 G. Carter Bentley (1987: 31), in a study of the ethnic ambivalence of a Muslim Maranao woman in the Philippines, similarly describes how she became estranged from Maranao cultural traditions after going to school in cosmopolitan Manila, but regained a sense of ethnic affinity after suffering discrimination – with Muslims being characterized as savage

identity on the political level, she remained unable to participate fully in Uyghur cultural life and made sporadic comments that suggested enduring internalized negative projections. By 2004, her political realignment with her minority status appeared almost complete. Yet at the same time she had managed to situationally manipulate her high degree of sinicization to win a prestigious promotion in her Chinese work unit. The pride she displayed when speaking of her *minkaomin* daughter's perfect command of both Uyghur and Chinese suggested that she had begun to envisage a middle way for the new generation: the potential for them to be simultaneously 100 per cent Uyghur (in the sense of being Central Asian) and 100 per cent Han (in the sense of being Chinese), albeit within obvious limits.[35]

Though Räwiä far from regretted placing her own daughter in a Uyghur school back in the nineties, she admitted that, a decade later, she was advising friends to do otherwise. She (and others anxious to preserve the Uyghur language and culture) would advise friends to first send their child to a Uyghur primary school for one or two years and then move the child to a Han school where they would start once more from Year One. This way, the child would establish an unshakeable foundation in the mother tongue before going on to acquire Chinese, the language required for socio-economic survival. The child would still be classed as *minkaohan*, thus maximizing their life chances. As more and more Han Chinese migrate to Xinjiang and competition for jobs further intensifies, we may expect this trend to perpetuate.

In this changed and changing environment, will we see *minkaohan* begin to develop a double or multiple consciousness, an ability to use identities situationally? Will they emerge – and be allowed to emerge – as modern Uyghur survivors? Or will this dual consciousness bring unbearable emotional and social consequences? Douglas wrote of the possibility of human beings allowing new patterns to evolve in which anomalies have a place. I suggest that this process may also come to pass in Ürümchi and other urban centres of Xinjiang. As *minkaohan* increase in number and slowly assume normality, a new, micro-diverse group classification is beginning to evolve: the *minkaohan*, previously deemed neither solid nor liquid, now emerges as 'treacle'. It remains unclear, however, whether that anomalous group will possess either the confidence or the will to 'branch off and declare itself an ethnic category' (Eriksen, 1993: 63).

Alcoff warns that '...cast off from all communities, the individual has no historical identity, and thus is unlikely to value the community's future' (1995: 274). In this way, rejected individuals may feel no affinity with, and therefore no loyalty to, the oppressed minority group. Yet with a heightened degree of tolerance from the rest of the Uyghur community, ethnic loyalty may be maintained, and the *minkaohan*

cutthroats and semi-human beings with tails. In another example of reactive identity, Drury (1996: 104–11) shows how Sikh girls in the UK developed 'Indian' and 'Pan-Asian' identities – in addition to their religio-cultural identities as Sikhs – in reaction to racial hostility and discrimination by the white English majority.

35 I borrow this concept from Hershel (1995: 172). She relates how the mother of a mixed-race child reframed positively the (negative) notion that he was 50 per cent Asian and 50 per cent white by saying that he was in fact 100 per cent Asian and 100 per cent white. Evidently, desired continuity of Uyghur religio-cultural practices will ensure that *minkaohan* are unwilling to assume Han Chinese identities completely.

identity has the potential to be transformed from a negative 'neither-nor' experience to a positive 'both-and' one (Eriksen, 1993: 62).[36] Alcoff (1995: 257, 276–8) draws on the writing of Anzaldua to suggest that the future requires a new, transformative way of thinking that celebrates 'identity without purity', that encourages the development of a positive hybrid consciousness. In this endeavour, an introspective family ethic and solid sense of belonging provided during a child's formative years will be key (Hershel, 1995: 179). Far from being represented as 'lack' and rejected by two communities, 'mixed' individuals may in the long-term come to serve as border-crossers, negotiators and bridges between communities (Alcoff, 1995: 276).[37] In this way, assimilation may not require conformity to the dominant norm, but may instead be associated with a pluralistic 'internationalist' identity such as that which Akiner (1995: 80–1) has envisaged for modern-day 'Kazakhstanis' or even with an 'antixenophobic cosmopolitanism' like that observed in Mexico (Alcoff, 1995: 264–5). In the post-1997 climate of ethno-political anti-climax and slowly improving inter-ethnic relations (at least among the urban youth), such a vision may after all be possible for Xinjiang if shored up by strongly supportive state policies and the collective will of its peoples.

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36 In the early days of independent Kazakhstan, Abduali Qaidarov, president of the state-supported Kazakh language revival society *Qazaq tili*, advocated compassion and understanding towards what he termed the 'unfortunate 40 per cent' [the Russian-speaking members of the ethnic Kazakh population]. As he put it, 'how can [Kazakhstan] afford to disown its very best and brightest sons?' (Dave, 1996: 54.) Indeed, research conducted by Barrington (2001: 151) at the end of the nineties highlighted the importance of ethnicity over language by showing that Russian-speaking Ukrainians thought more like their Ukrainian-speaking ethnic brethren on matters of independence than like ethnic Russians.

37 Dave (1996: 63) notes that the Russian-speaking identity may one day become the basis on which Kazakhstan emerges as an ethnically inclusive state, should conditions prove supportive at both elite and society levels.

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Conclusion

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One of the key contributions made by this volume to the study of Xinjiang and more particularly to the study of the Uyghurs is to demonstrate that this group is much more than the current economic and political entity that is the 'Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region'. One reason why the field of 'Xinjiang Studies' has struggled thus far to emerge may be precisely because the Uyghurs – as the dominant ethnic group in the region – could not be entirely contained within China's political, territorial and cultural borders, either at different periods through history or indeed at the current time. In addressing the myriad issues surrounding this 'transnational people' (cf. Roberts, 1998), one might speak more fruitfully of a discipline named 'Uyghur Studies', a space where scholars might escape the sinological or Central Asianist straitjacket and explore, compare and contrast the customs, practices and complex identities of not just Uyghurs living within the contemporary territory of the People's Republic of China, but also those in the independent Central Asian republics and in diasporic communities around the world (Istanbul, Munich, Washington, etc).

Through these twelve historical and contemporary studies of hybrid social and cultural practices and identifications formed over centuries of cross-cultural interaction, we hope to have shown that even when focusing on Uyghurs living within the People's Republic we are dealing with a people not necessarily or solely locked into 'Us and Them' politics with the Chinese state. The two historical studies which open this volume (Newby; Kamalov) examine, respectively, socio-cultural practices, interactions and identifications among Uyghurs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Soviet ethnological literature in the pre-1949 period to prove two things beyond doubt: first, that an identity is not reliant on the existence of an ethnonym (cf. Gladney, 1990); secondly, that modern Uyghur national identity was not 'created' by the Chinese state (cf. Gladney, 1990, 2004; Rudelson, 1997; Ben-Adam, 1999), but was initiated much earlier in Russian Central Asia. While the case may convincingly be argued that certain other minority nationalities living within the borders of the People's Republic were effectively 'created' following state bestowal of an ethnonym (Harrell, 1994; Kaup, 2000), this is clearly not the case for the Uyghurs.

Our attempt to situate the Uyghurs between China and Central Asia has resulted in a partial rejection of the tripartite scheme of Uyghurs caught between China and Central Asia. While this initial classification provided us with a useful analytical tool, we recognize that it carries its own limitations, and that the dynamics of cultural contact involve complexities which do not fit neatly into the straitjacket of political opposition: on the contrary, this initial collection of chapters suggests that

in addition to strategies of resistance, there are myriad strategies of accommodation, adaptation and negotiation to be recognized and explored.

It is equally apparent that the Uyghur condition in contemporary Xinjiang should not be conceived as one of an enclosed state of victimhood; it is also consistently influenced by global interactions, flows of information across borders and demonstrations of Uyghur agency. Worldly cross-fertilizations, initiated once by migrations, travels along the Silk Road, trade interactions and intermarriage, are today facilitated by Uyghur study, travel and pilgrimage abroad, the growth of foreign tourism in Xinjiang, cross-border trade and the influx of foreign materials and global news and images imported via the audio-visual mass media. Uyghur dialogues today are no more restricted to conversations with the Chinese state than they were prior to the arrival of the Communists in 1949; on the contrary, they increasingly draw on alternative forms of knowledge, belief, and practice emanating from Central Asia, the Middle East and the Western world, whether this results in a renaissance of orthodox Islamic practice or the purchase of a bracelet threaded with skull beads in allegiance to pop star Pink's brand of personal rebellion and emancipation. Individual Uyghurs are increasingly starting to make strategic choices concerning their life course during the past two decades, controlled decisions which may not be interpreted simply as evidence of sinicisation or 'acculturation' (see Smith and Cesàro in this volume). Rather, they show the resourcefulness and tenacity which frequently emerge when human beings face difficult circumstances. Furthermore, some members of the educated Uyghur elite have begun in recent years to assume a more public role in the local articulation and negotiation of Uyghur identity, suggesting that Uyghurs may ultimately emerge as shapers of their own fate (see Sulayman and Dawut in this volume).

There are of course many important issues which have not been addressed in this volume, but which we hope will be explored in future research, such as cultural contact between the Uyghurs and less populous groups in Xinjiang; socio-economic stratifications among the Uyghurs, Han Chinese and other groups; the impacts of accelerated modernization on social, cultural and religious practices; and globalizing trends including the impact of Western popular culture (from Eminem to flamenco) among the urban youth. Particularly desirable are more studies on all aspects of Uyghur experience in the countryside. Yet no publication should be judged by what has been left out of it: with this volume we hope to point to new directions for a more holistic study of the Uyghurs than that hitherto pursued, and in a wider sense to re-direct the current course of research on identity and cultural contact. Our interdisciplinary approach which juxtaposes historical and literary studies with anthropological and sociological research, micro-level case studies with new data from the archives and libraries, has hopefully brought fresh insights into a scholarly discourse which for some time has been dominated by political science, and has revolved around the 'powerful state vs. oppressed minority group' model. It allows for a cross-fertilization that enriches our understanding of complex lived realities in a region long subjected to multiple and sometimes conflicting socio-cultural influences, and whose convoluted history far outstretches the (almost) six decades of Chinese Communist experience in the recent past. We hope that this approach will encourage the coming of age of the discipline of 'Uyghur studies' and subsequently

the proliferation of future projects which look beyond the construction of Otherness in relation to the Han to consider the role of Central Asian, Middle Eastern, Western and other cultures in the shaping of Uyghur identities.

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